

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Annual Report 1997–98

Australian Bureau of Statistics
Canberra

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GPO Box 84, Canberra, ACT 2601.

The Honourable Peter Costello, MP
Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

In accordance with the provisions of section 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, I hereby submit to you, for presentation to the Parliament, this report on the operations of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 1998.

This report complies with 'Requirements for Departmental Annual Reports' approved by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts under subsection 25(7) of the *Public Service Act 1922*.

The report is dated on the day I approved the finalised text for printing.

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

29 September 1998

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Mission

*We assist and encourage informed decision-making,
research and discussion within governments and
the community, by providing a high quality,
objective and responsive national statistical service.*

Australian Bureau of Statistics Corporate Plan

Objectives

Purpose

Informed and satisfied clients through an objective, relevant and responsive statistical service.

Product

Reliable, timely and coherent statistics.

Providers

Good relations with providers, respecting their rights.

People

A team of people with the skills and motivation to achieve the ABS mission.

Productivity

Continuing productivity improvements.

Profile

A high regard held for the ABS by decision makers and the community.

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Note

After the first reference in this report, the Australian Bureau of Statistics is generally referred to as the Bureau or the ABS, and the Australian Statistics Advisory Council as the Advisory Council or ASAC.

Where to get information

For any inquiries about the contents of this report, or to obtain 'Information on Request' documents (listed in Appendix 15), please contact: Director, ABS Secretariat, PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT 2616. Telephone (02) 6252 5760. Facsimile (02) 6252 8017.

This report, guides to ABS services, other selected documents, and a range of ABS statistics, are available electronically on the ABS's homepage service on the Internet (<http://www.abs.gov.au>).

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's official statistical agency. It provides statistics on a wide range of economic and social matters, covering government, business and the population in general. It also has an important coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies.

For Commonwealth Government program budgeting purposes, the ABS is a single program (Program 3.0) within the Treasury portfolio comprising two sub-programs. These are:

- 3.1 Statistical Operations; and
- 3.2 Corporate Services.

Internally, the ABS sub-programs are broken into 57 components. The Statistical Operations sub-program comprises 48 of these components, while the Corporate Services sub-program comprises nine. These components, which cover ABS collection activities as well as the various support functions, are listed in Appendix 1. Chapters 4 and 5 of this report provide an account of the activities and achievements of each component.

The ABS has a Central Office in Canberra and eight Regional Offices – one in each State and Territory capital city. The Regional Offices have responsibility for the Australia-wide operations of particular statistical collections, but overall program responsibility remains in Central Office. Regional Offices also allow the ABS to maintain close contact with State clients, including State government agencies, and with ABS data providers.

The ABS is headed by the Australian Statistician – a statutory office. Appendix 2 lists the ABS executive which supports the Australian Statistician.

The Statistical Operations sub-program is jointly headed by two Deputy Australian Statisticians who are responsible for the Economic Statistics Group and the Population Statistics Group. These two groups represent the key dichotomy of ABS statistics between economic statistics and social and labour statistics. Supporting each of the Deputy Australian Statisticians is a Division Head, one for the Economic Accounts Division and one for the Social and Labour Division. Other Division Heads are responsible for the Technology Services Division, Methodology Division and Information Services Division, all of which lie within the Statistical Operations sub-program. The Corporate Services sub-program is managed by the Head of the Corporate Services Division.

The remainder of this chapter provides overview information about the ABS. This includes a brief outline of the legislation under which the ABS carries out its functions, and a summary of the role and operation of the agency, including performance highlights during 1997–98. The chapter also includes a summary of financial and human resources, planning processes, contribution to social justice and equity

outcomes, progress made in developing a service charter, internal and external scrutiny to which the ABS has been exposed during the year, security arrangements, and supplementary documents which provide additional information on the operations of the ABS.

On 25 May 1998 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs tabled its report *Saving our census and preserving our history*. The Government is considering its response to the Committee's report, so it is inappropriate for the ABS to comment on 'where to from here'. However, in the report and associated public material are many comments, assertions and accusations which are critical of the ABS, the position it took and the role it played in the review. The purposes of Chapter 2 are to refute many of those comments and to briefly summarise the ABS's view.

Chapter 3 outlines significant recent developments in price and labour cost indexes which ensure that both of these indexes continue to meet the needs of users in an evolving economic and industrial relations environment.

ABS financial statements are contained in Chapter 6.

AUTHORITY AND LEGISLATION

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the ABS are the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* as follows:

- '(a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, by arrangements with the Governments of the States, provide statistical services for those Governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure co-ordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to –
 - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;
 - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
 - (iii) the maximum possible utilisation, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;

- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters.'

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* also established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). Subsection 18 (1) of the Act specifies that the functions of the Advisory Council are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:

- '(a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.'

All State and Territory governments are represented on ASAC, and the remaining Council members are drawn from a wide variety of organisations and interests. The Council provides valuable input into the directions and priorities of the ABS work program and is described in its annual report to Parliament. During 1997–98, six new members were appointed to ASAC, seven members retired or resigned and two members completed their membership terms.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* provides the Statistician with the authority to conduct statistical collections, including the Census of Population and Housing and, when necessary, to direct a person to provide statistical information. The Act requires the ABS to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.

ROLE AND OPERATION

The mission of the ABS is to assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

The ABS maintains close contact with its users through a variety of mechanisms, including advisory committees, user groups, outposted statistical officers, conferences and seminars, and day-to-day contact in the course of disseminating data. The Australian Statistician determines which statistics are to be collected, after full discussion with users,

clients and ASAC, and makes the results widely available. The independent status of the Australian Statistician is specified in law, and the ABS has always received strong Parliamentary and community support.

In order to provide official statistics, the ABS undertakes a large number of collections ranging from the five yearly Census of Population and Housing, to monthly and quarterly surveys that provide current economic indicators and less frequent collections from industry and households that provide detailed information on specific economic and social issues. The ABS also devotes considerable effort, in close cooperation with Commonwealth, State and Territory administrative agencies, to producing statistics as a by-product of administrative systems. The ABS also tries to ensure that its statistical standards and concepts are applied as widely as possible.

In releasing statistics, the ABS follows long established principles that results should be made available as soon as practicable and should be equally available to all users. In recognition of the importance of free and ready access to statistics for the community generally, a large core set of statistics is made available through 528 public, technical and tertiary libraries across Australia. Complimentary copies of ABS publications are provided to members of parliament and to major news media organisations. The principal results from these publications are highlighted daily in the print and electronic media.

Under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, Commonwealth and State statistical services have been integrated in all States since 1958 (in Tasmania since 1924). Although not covered by the Act, similar arrangements apply in both Territories. In Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania, the Regional Director administering the ABS Office is also the State Government Statistician. A government statistical coordination and consultative mechanism operates in most States and Territories. There is regular consultation with State and Territory governments on statistical priorities.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

During 1997–98 the ABS continued to provide a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service. This section highlights new information products released during the year and other notable releases, important statistical developments, improvements in ABS infrastructure and coordination, international activities, and ABS management initiatives.

Information Products

The ABS increased the number of publication titles released from 326 in 1996–97 to 349 in 1997–98. New releases included:

- Final results from the 1996 survey of aspects of literacy in *Aspects of Literacy: Assessed Skill Levels, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4228.0) on International Literacy Day, contributing to national debate on levels of literacy in the Australian community.

- *Mental Health and Well-being: Profile of Adults, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4326.0). The publication contains information on the prevalence of specific mental disorders, the disablement associated with these disorders and the use made of health services. This collection was the most comprehensive of its kind ever attempted in Australia. The survey commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services was carried out as part of the National Mental Health Strategy.
- *Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Australia, 1982 to 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4398.0), containing a time series showing changing patterns of causes of infant and child mortality in Australia by socio-demographic characteristics for the years 1982–96.
- *Australian Criminal Courts 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4513.0), presenting detailed information on the flow of criminal matters through Australia's higher courts.
- A compendium publication *Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4156.0), providing a statistical overview of sport and recreation (including gambling) in Australia.
- *Business of Music, Australia, 1995–96* (ABS Cat. no. 4143.0), providing an economic picture of the Australian music industry for the 1995–96 financial year.
- Information on the use of the Internet by householders (in ABS Cat. no. 8147.0).
- A compendium publication on the electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries for the reference year 1995–96 (in ABS Cat. no. 8208.0).
- Final results from the 1995–96 mining industry collection, which included services to mining for the first time (in ABS Cat. no. 8414.0).
- *Manufacturing, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8225.0) which combines manufacturing data from a number of different sources.
- Statistics on the community services industry in respect of 1995–96 (in ABS Cat. no. 8696.0).
- Stock, supply and use information for mineral resources in *Mineral Account, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4608.0).
- The quarterly *Wage Cost Index, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6345.0).

Other notable releases during the year were:

- Results from the first and second phases of the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns (in ABS Cat. no. 6286.0).

- *Employer Training Expenditure, Australia 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 6353.0) and *Employer Training Practices, Australia 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 6356.0).
- The fifth edition of *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0), which describes Australian society and how it is changing over time.
- *Youth, Australia: A Social Report, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0), the first in a series of social reports on special groups in the population.
- Results from the 1995 national nutrition survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4802.0). The survey was conducted jointly with the Department of Health and Family Services and included questions on food and beverage consumption, nutrient intake, eating habits and dietary attitudes.
- *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4130.0), *Investors in Rental Dwellings, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8711.0) and results from the 1995–96 and 1996–97 surveys of income and housing costs (in ABS Cat. no. 6523.0).
- Results from the 1997 family characteristics survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4402.0), which collected information on living arrangements, and custodial, child support and access arrangements for children who do not live with both natural parents.
- Enhancement of statistics in *Recorded Crime, Australia 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4510.0) to include information on the outcome of investigations by police and a range of new cross-classifications on crime victims.
- A compendium publication on the small business sector in *Small Business in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1321.0).
- Statistics on the use of information and telecommunications technologies in the home (in ABS Cat. nos. 8146.0 and 8128.0).
- *Agriculture, Australia, 1995–6* (ABS Cat. no. 7113.0), a compendium publication on the structure of the Australian farming sector.
- Statistics in respect of 1995–96 for legal and accounting services (in ABS Cat. no. 8678.0), computing services (in ABS Cat. no. 8669.0), real estate agents (in ABS Cat. no. 8663.0), consultant engineering services (in ABS Cat. no. 8693.0) and the accommodation industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8695.0).
- Statistics in respect of 1996–97 on the casino industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8683.0) and the motion picture exhibition industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8654.0).

During 1997–98, the ABS released data from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, the majority in July 1997, less than a year after Census night and more quickly than any previous census. These included:

- Basic community profiles, expanded community profiles, time series profiles, usual residence profiles, working population profiles, Indigenous community profiles and three sets of statistical publications for each State and Territory.
- *Social Atlases* (ABS Cat. no. 2030.0) for all capital cities.
- *Census of Population and Housing: Population Growth and Distribution, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 2035.0) which includes information on the growth, location and mobility of the population at national, State and regional levels.
- *Population Distribution, Indigenous Australians* (ABS Cat. no. 4705.0) which provides census counts for Indigenous people in over 1000 geographic areas and locations and analysis of changes in the counts since 1991.
- Life expectancy estimates and experimental estimates and projections of the ATSI population based on the 1996 Census (in ABS Cat. nos. 3230.0 and 3231.0).

There were also some important releases of electronic products which included:

- CDATA96, a CD-ROM product which combines census data with mapping data and sophisticated mapping and analysis software.
- Census Keydata, a CD-ROM product containing encrypted census and boundary data.
- CLIB96, a CD-ROM product provided free of charge to libraries which are part of the ABS Library Extension Program.
- Census data on the Internet with simple map-based searching facilities.
- *Integrated Regional Data Base (IRDB), Australia, 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 1353.0).
- *Catalogue of Publications and Products on CD-ROM, 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 1361.0.30.001).
- *PC Ausstats on CD-ROM, June Quarter 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 1401.0.30.001).
- *Directory of Tourism Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1130.0) released in hard copy and on the Internet.
- *National Nutrition Survey: Confidentialised Unit Record File, Australia, 1995* (ABS Cat. nos. 4807.0.15.001 and 4807.0.30.001).
- *Women's Safety Survey, Confidentialised Unit Record File, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4128.0.15.001).

*Publication launch of the Mental Health and Wellbeing survey at Parliament House,
(from left) Leonie Manns, Deputy Chair of the National Advisory Group on Mental
Health, and member of the Steering Management Committee for the survey.*

Tim Skinner, Deputy Australian Statistician, and at the podium

Dr Michael Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Family Services

Statistical Developments

1997–98 saw the completion of a highly successful 1996 Census of Population and Housing, which not only cost less to conduct than the 1991 Census, but also released a diverse range of information products much earlier than any previous census. The success of the 1996 Census also added to the international standing the ABS has in this field. In addition to assistance which the ABS provides directly to other national statistical agencies on planning and conducting a census, the ABS has been commissioned by the United Nations to develop a handbook on census management to assist member countries.

Planning has begun for the next census to be held in 2001. The first step in the public consultation process for the 2001 Census was the release of an information paper entitled *2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS Views on Content and Procedures* (ABS Cat. no. 2007.0). The information paper describes the proposed procedures for the 2001 Census and possible topics for inclusion and invites submissions from interested persons.

1997–98 also saw the completion of a project to develop and implement a new wage cost index (WCI). The *Wage Cost Index, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6345.0) was published for the first time in March 1998 for the reference quarter December 1997. The index measures quarterly changes in wage and salary costs for employee jobs, unaffected by changes in the quality and quantity of work performed, providing an important new indicator for monitoring wage growth. The WCI is the first stage in the development of a full Labour Cost Index which will eventually encompass other labour costs such as employer funded superannuation, workers' compensation, payroll tax and paid leave. Further information on the development of the wage cost index can be found in Chapter 3 'Recent Developments in Price and Labour Cost Indexes'.

In addition to the extensive range of social and labour surveys which are conducted at regular intervals, the ABS undertook development work on a number of household surveys in 1997–98. These activities included completion of field work for the second national Time Use Survey which obtained information on daily time use patterns including time spent on unpaid household and voluntary work. Results from the Time Use Survey will be released late in 1998. Activities also included development and completion of field work for the 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, to obtain information on people with disabilities and their needs for care and support. This is the first ABS survey to employ computer aided interviewing (CAI) using a database system for item specification and question design from its beginning, carrying through to processing and data storage in the ABS data warehouse (ABSDB). Initial results from this survey are expected to be released early in 1999. Social and labour surveys which have begun development work in 1997–98 and will be continued in 1998–99 include the 1998–99 Household Expenditure Survey, the 1999 Australian Housing Survey and the 2000 Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation.

Surveys which were conducted for the first time included an economic survey of libraries, museums and the arts, and a survey of business sponsorship of the arts and sport.

The ABS also prepared the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information Plan for the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, and commenced work on implementing the Plan's recommendations. The report followed a process of consultation with key government and community interest groups in each State and Territory.

During 1997–98 the ABS finalised plans for implementing revised national account standards contained in the United Nations' *A System of National Accounts 1993* (SNA93). This included the release of an information paper, *Implementation of Revised International Standards in the Australian National Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5251.0). The September quarter 1998 accounts will be released in accordance with SNA93. Another key development in the national accounts area during the year was the completion of detailed proposals for annually reweighted chain volume measures, which will replace constant price estimates from the September quarter 1998 accounts. These changes were outlined in an information paper, *Introduction of Chain Volume Measures in the Australian National Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5248.0), which contained experimental estimates. The estimation of GDP was also significantly improved during the year through the introduction of better quality source data.

The ABS implemented revised international standards for balance of payments and international investment position statistics contained in the fifth edition of the International Monetary Fund's *Balance of Payments Manual* and the SNA93. An information paper was published in September 1997 describing the changes in detail, and statistics compiled in accordance with the revised standards were introduced for the September quarter 1997 release of *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5302.0). The ABS also released a discussion paper, *Options for Australian Globalisation Statistics*, which described the conceptual and practical issues involved if the ABS were to collect statistics on foreign owned businesses in Australia and Australian owned businesses abroad.

1997–98 saw the completion of the most comprehensive review of the CPI since its inception in 1960. The key outcome of the review is that the focus of the CPI will change from the measurement of changes in the living costs of wage and salary earner households to the measurement of price inflation for the household sector as a whole. Details were provided in an information paper, *Outcome of the 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review* (ABS Cat. no. 6453.0) released on 12 November 1997. The change in direction for the CPI will guide ABS development activity in consumer prices for a number of years. The first and most noticeable changes will occur with the introduction of the 13th Series CPI in September quarter 1998 when mortgage interest and consumer credit charges will be excluded from the index and net expenditure on new dwellings (excluding land) will be included.

The ABS has also made significant progress on a long term program to establish producer price indexes for the output of industries in the service sector of the economy. Experimental series have been established for most of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) classes in the Transport and Storage Division and Property Services Subdivision. In the Business Services Subdivision collections have been established for several industry classes and work is progressing on another ten classes. An information paper describing these developments will be released during 1998–99.

During 1997–98, the ABS published a range of information technology statistics and developed surveys to be conducted during 1998–99 on business and government use of information technology.

Development work began in 1997–98 and will be continued in 1998–99 to develop a quarterly economy wide survey to replace the existing surveys of new capital expenditure, stocks and sales, company profits and the private sector component of the survey of employment and earnings.

In line with its commitment to maximise the use of administrative by-product data, during 1997–98 the ABS developed a methodology and systems for combining income tax data and ABS business income and expenditure data for the service industries for the 1995–96 and 1996–97 financial years.

Infrastructure and Coordination

The ABS continued to invest in infrastructure such as computing facilities, conceptual frameworks and classifications, the register of businesses (which provides the basis for the ABS's wide range of business based surveys), and a corresponding population survey framework which supports household surveys.

The ABS also continued to focus on coordinating its activities with those of other agencies, and on minimising the reporting burden being placed on data providers. The Statistical Clearing House, which was set up in July 1997, plays a key role in the coordination of statistical collections conducted by Commonwealth agencies.

One of the more significant achievements in 1997–98 was the progress made on the development of the ABS information warehouse (known as the ABSDB) which is now in production providing facilities to store the output from ABS statistical collections, together with detailed metadata describing the statistics and the underlying statistical concepts and methodologies. All regular, sub-annual collections and many annual collections are loaded to the ABSDB and most statistical dissemination, on paper and electronically, is undertaken from it. This represents a major achievement, increasing the effectiveness of client and information services and positioning the ABS to be able to quickly take advantage of emerging dissemination technologies. The ABSDB has replaced many other output systems and the warehouse-based publication system embodies significantly improved information presentation and communication standards.

During 1997–98 the ABS made substantial progress on the redevelopment of systems supporting the ABS central register of businesses.

The ABS also established a 'Year 2000 Test Laboratory' to enable comprehensive compliance testing in a simulated year 2000 environment, in order to ensure that ABS systems correctly support operations in the transition to the year 2000.

Other technology related developments during 1997–98 were:

- Gartner benchmarking surveys of IT services. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement of its IT services, the ABS has been benchmarking itself against a sample of Australian and international businesses for several years using the Gartner benchmarking service. Overall, this benchmarking has consistently shown that the ABS is performing very well against this peer group, although some areas where improvement could be made have been identified and steps introduced to improve performance.
- Systems development and maintenance. The ABS remains among the most cost effective organisations included in the benchmark group. In the area of distributed computing, the total cost per user is also below the level of peer organisations.
- Assistance to a number of Commonwealth agencies to implement firewalls for electronic communication. This followed the ABS being the first Commonwealth agency to receive Defence Signals Directorate endorsement of its external gateway for electronic communication in 1996–97.

During 1997–98 the ABS achieved significant outcomes in classifications and standards. These included the development of a new Indigenous geographic classification specifically designed for the preparation of local area statistics about Indigenous people, particularly census statistics. The ABS has also facilitated national agreement on new data standards for national corrective services statistics. The ABS released the following products during the year:

- The second edition of the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations* (ABS Cat. no. 1220.0), and the *Australian Standard Offence Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1234.0)
- *Australian and New Zealand Standard Commodity Classification (ANZSCC) Coder on Floppy Disk, 1993–94* (ABS Cat. no. 1254.0.15.002).
- *Standards for Cash Income Statistics, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 1287.0).

The ABS regularly publishes guides to statistics to assist users in understanding ABS releases. In August 1997 the ABS released the second edition of the *Statistical Concepts Reference Library* (ABS Cat. no. 1361.0.30.001). This CD-ROM product provides a comprehensive reference library of ABS publications describing the concepts sources and methods used to compile Australia's major economic and social

statistics as well as a number of ABS classifications. Other new releases in 1997-98 included:

- *National Nutrition Survey: Users' Guide, 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4801.0).
- *Survey of Income and Housing Costs, Australia: User Guide, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 6553.0).

International Involvement

The ABS is widely acknowledged to be an important and active member of the international statistical community. Highlights of this involvement in 1997-98 included:

- Re-election of Tim Skinner, the Deputy Australian Statistician, Population Statistics Group, as Chair of the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, a body set up by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the training of statisticians in member countries.
- Continued involvement with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), a body established to provide technical advice, assistance, training and applied research to island member countries in the Pacific region, including statistical assistance. Two senior ABS staff work for the SPC. During the year the ABS made officers available for technical assistance and to conduct statistical training courses for a number of Pacific Island countries on behalf of the SPC.
- Continued provision of support to many overseas statistical agencies, particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region. Of particular note were visits to the ABS by the Director General of the State Statistical Bureau of China and the Deputy General Director of the General Statistical Office of Vietnam, to strengthen professional relations between the ABS and the two organisations. In addition, there was a visit to the ABS by the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division for discussions on international statistical activities and study of activities in which the ABS is among the world leaders.
- Continued support to the South African Central Statistical Service (CSS) as part of the AusAID funded Capacity Building Program. From January 1996 to the end of June 1998 the program has seen 19 ABS staff members visit CSS to provide assistance and 31 CSS staff members visit the ABS for intensive statistical training.
- A successful application to AusAID, for funding under the Government Sector Linkages Program, to promote cooperation between the ABS and the Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia. Activities under this program will be carried out in 1998-99.

Pictured from left, Bill McLennan, Australian Statistician, with two members of a delegation from China which visited the ABS during 1997–98, Mr Du Weiqun, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation within the State Statistical Bureau (SSB), and Mr Liu Hong, the Director General of the SSB.

Management

Notable developments during 1997–98 included the following:

- Consultation was undertaken during the year with staff and employee organisations about a Certified Agreement (CA) to cover ABS *Public Service Act 1922* employees. Consultations regarding a CA for household survey interviewers were also held with Population Survey Operations interviewers.
- Graduation of the first group of senior officers from the ABS Leadership Program. The Program was developed in partnership with the Australian Graduate School of Management as a flagship program for potential leaders of the ABS.
- Graduation of the first group of officers from the ABS Graduate Certificate in Management. This is a senior management program developed in partnership with and primarily conducted by the University of Canberra.
- Introduction of a trial Performance Management Scheme for staff at the ASO1-6 levels, in addition to the schemes already in operation for Senior Officer and SES staff. Training for the new scheme was available to staff in all offices and will continue in 1998–99.
- Initiation of the ABS Project Management Framework, which will establish a national framework, with associated training, to assist ABS officers manage projects.
- Revision of the presentation of the ABS's Forward Work Program document to give emphasis to the outputs, clients and uses, and developments in individual programs.
- The availability of contracted professional advice from external service providers has strengthened the ABS's efficiency, compliance and IT audit processes.

PROVIDER LOAD

The November 1996 Small Business Deregulation Task Force report *Time for Business* reported that statistics accounted for around one per cent of the total time small business spent on paper and compliance work. Nevertheless, the ABS continues to seek reductions in the load it places on all businesses, and in particular on small businesses. The following table shows provider load (measured in thousands of hours taken to complete statistical forms) imposed by the ABS on businesses from 1995–96 to 1997–98.

**PROVIDER LOAD IMPOSED ON BUSINESSES BY ABS
(HOURS '000)**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Small businesses(a)	321	265	252
Other businesses	321	333	278
All businesses	642	598	530

(a) Defined as business with less than 20 employees.

Overall, the load imposed on all business providers by the ABS fell by 11.4% in 1997-98, an overall decrease of 17.4% since 1995-96. The load imposed on small businesses fell by 4.9%. This represents an overall reduction of 21.5% since 1995-96 and exceeds the commitment of a 20% reduction announced when the Small Business Deregulation Task Force was established in 1996.

The prospects for achieving further reductions in provider load in future years are good. Some key recommendations of the Task Force, including those in respect of the Statistical Clearing House, are still to have a significant impact and an overall reduction of about 30% is expected by the end of 1998-99.

Initiatives expected to significantly ease provider load during 1998-99 include:

- expanding the use of Australian Taxation Office data as an alternative to ABS collections;
- reducing the sample size of most business collections due to improvements in the quality of information stored on the ABS business register; and
- exploiting opportunities for capturing data electronically from providers.

STATISTICAL CLEARING HOUSE

The Small Business Deregulation Task Force recommended in its 1996 report *Time for Business* that statistical collections affecting 50 or more businesses and run by, or on behalf of, Commonwealth government departments and agencies be subject to a central clearance process. The purpose of the recommendation was to ensure that all such surveys were necessary and well designed. The clearance process would also be an effective means of monitoring the load imposed on business respondents. In view of its statistical expertise and statutory coordination role, the ABS was asked to administer the clearance process.

The Statistical Clearing House was set up on 1 July 1997. Over the next six months clearance procedures were developed based on an agreed set of review criteria. Survey Liaison Officers were identified in each Commonwealth government department and agency known to have significant business survey activity. The primary role of these Liaison Officers is to ensure that all Commonwealth government

statistical collections are vetted by the Statistical Clearing House and that the procedures are well understood by survey managers. A Statistical Clearing House User Group was established to obtain feedback from survey managers and other stakeholders and to help streamline clearance procedures.

Clearance operations began on 1 December 1997 for ABS surveys and on 1 January 1998 for collections conducted by other Commonwealth agencies. The aim is to examine every Commonwealth government statistical collection by June 1999, starting with the largest repeating surveys, and to review them periodically.

The table below shows the numbers of survey reviews at various stages of completion on 30 June 1998. Of the 41 completed reviews, all but one have resulted in approval to proceed. However, of these, Statistical Clearing House intervention has resulted in 21 instances of improved survey design and/or reduced provider load. To date, an average of eight staff days are being spent on each review.

STATISTICAL CLEARING HOUSE — STAGES OF REVIEW OF STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>Not Yet Started</i>	<i>Total</i>
ABS	23	17	59	99
Other	18	8	9	35
Total	41	25	68	134

The ABS has been monitoring the total annual load imposed on providers by its own collections for several years. For 1997–98 this has been estimated at 530,000 hours. In the absence of past records, it will not be possible to assess the annual load imposed by other agencies until the Clearing House program has been running for at least twelve months. However, preliminary indications are that the load for all other Commonwealth agencies together will be less than 10% of the ABS figure.

A significant by-product of the Statistical Clearing House program is the Commonwealth Register of Surveys of Businesses (available on the Internet at <http://www.sch.abs.gov.au>). The Register lists the statistical collections subject to clearance together with information about them provided to the Statistical Clearing House during the clearance process. The Register will become an important element of the clearance process as, over time, it becomes the primary means through which organisations which have particular data needs can identify collections that have already been conducted. This information is expected to significantly reduce the potential for duplication. As soon as practicable, the Register will be expanded to include survey design standards and best practices. Wherever possible, it will also provide direct links to the results of collections included in the Register.

During 1998–99, repeat collections that have not yet been examined by the Statistical Clearing House will be reviewed, as will all new surveys. Once all collections have been reviewed, the Statistical Clearing House program will be publicised through business and

market research associations with the aim of encouraging businesses to give priority to responding to approved surveys.

Towards the end of 1998–99 the Statistical Clearing House program will be subject to an independent evaluation of its effectiveness so that any recommended changes can be implemented before its third year of operations begins.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The ABS compiles its financial statements on an accrual basis. The 1997–98 financial statements can be found in Chapter 6. The 1997–98 operating expenses totalled \$240 million, compared with \$327 million in 1996–97. In 1997–98 revenue from the sale of statistical products and provision of services totalled \$31.5 million, an increase of \$7.9 million on 1996–97 (\$23.6 million). The major contributor to this increase was the sale of products and services from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

A summary of the appropriations to the ABS and the program outlays, as estimated at the presentation of the 1997–98 Commonwealth Budget (updated by the Additional Estimates), is shown in the table below.

RECONCILIATION OF SUB-PROGRAMS AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION(a) ELEMENTS FOR 1997–98 (\$'000)

Sub-program	A Approp. Acts No.s 1 & 3	+B Approp. Acts No.s 2 & 4	+C Special Approps	+D Annotated Approps(b)	=E Budget Program Approps	-F Adjust- ments(c)	=G Budget Program Outlays
Statistical Operations	192 870	1 456	0	29 760	224 086	29 760	194 326
Corporate Services	26 042	0	0	240	26 282	300	25 982
Total	218 912	1 456	0	30 000	250 368	30 060	220 308

(a) As at presentation of the 1997–98 Commonwealth Budget, updated by Additional Estimates.

(b) Annotated Appropriations are a form of special appropriations to allow an agency access to the money it earns.

(c) Adjustments include receipts which are offset against outlays. ABS receipts include miscellaneous receipts which are not eligible for consideration as Annotated Appropriations.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING RESOURCES SUMMARY

	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
ACCRUAL BASIS (\$'000)			
Expenses			
Employee expenses	153 552	239 874	170 619
Other administrative expenses	103 096	87 056	69 710
Total expenses	256 648	326 930	240 329
Revenue (including administered revenue)	25 537	23 657	31 791
Total assets	73 429	72 971	87 996
Total liabilities	68 549	71 646	72 257
Staff years			
TOTAL STAFFING(a)	3 225	3 980	3 199

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at full-time equivalent. Excludes unpaid inoperative staff. More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1. Includes revisions to previous year staffing levels as indicated in Table 3.1.

HUMAN RESOURCES

At 30th June 1998 the ABS employed 3,148 staff under the *Public Service Act 1922*. For the year 1997–98 as a whole, 3,199 staff years were provided. In addition, 248 staff years of service were provided in 1997–98 by persons (mostly household survey interviewers) appointed under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

In addition to the operations of a Central Office in Canberra and eight Regional Offices, a Data Processing Centre was established in Sydney to undertake the processing operations of the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing conducted in August 1996. The bulk of processing staff for the 1996 Census were employed between September 1996 and 31 July 1997.

The average number of paid staff for each office over the past three years is shown in the following table.

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF (average paid staff over the year(a))

Office	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
Operative Staff	—	—	—
Central Office (Canberra)	1531	1610	1543
New South Wales	352	350	341
Victoria	345	330	301
Queensland	247	238	225
Western Australia	232	235	222
South Australia	185	196	208
Tasmania	142	146	143
Northern Territory	59	58	52
Australian Capital Territory Office	11	11	11
Population Census			
Data Processing Centre (NSW)	37	728	78
Total operative staff	3141	3902	3125
Paid inoperative staff(b)	84	78	74
Total average paid staff	3225	3980	3199

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at full-time equivalent. Excludes unpaid inoperative staff. More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1. Includes revisions to previous year staffing levels as indicated in Table 3.1.

(b) For example, staff on approved leave for periods of twelve weeks or longer.

Appendixes 2 and 3 provide a range of information on ABS staffing, including information on classifications, location, representation of EEO groups and intake and separations.

PLANNING

The provision of an effective and efficient national statistical service is a complex management exercise because of the diverse nature of user requirements. While the ABS recognises that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, it seeks to react positively and responsibly to the demonstrated needs of its users. At the same time, the ABS is conscious of the constraints on public spending and on the workload placed on providers of information for its collections. Continued effort is made to review and, where possible, reduce provider load.

The latest ABS Corporate Plan (released in 1994–95) reaffirms ABS commitment to providing high quality, objective and responsive statistical services to governments and the community.

The ABS maintains a three-year forward work program which is 'rolled forward' by one year each year. The program is based on the set of components described in Chapters 4 and 5. Work programs are developed, resources are allocated, and performance indicators are established at these and lower levels.

Each year, relative priorities and competing resource requirements of all program components are formally and extensively considered by senior management. Particular attention is given to:

- The extent to which particular statistical activities continue to be justified vis-à-vis other work for which a demand has been expressed by users.
- The cost imposed on respondents to collections, in terms of time, effort and loss of privacy.
- Prospective total resources available to the Bureau within the three-year period.
- The market potential and revenue implications of the various initiatives proposed.
- Productivity gains which have been achieved or which might be possible in the future.
- Total demands on the service areas which the proposed forward work program would entail.

Proposals from managers of program components are considered by senior management, generally following consultation with major users. The proposed forward work program and estimates which emerge are then considered by ASAC. The work program is finalised in the light of ASAC advice.

The culmination of the year's planning cycle is a comprehensive document describing for each ABS program the outputs, clients and uses of the statistical information, and the main medium term developments. Resources used for each ABS program are also provided. This document is available for public scrutiny and comment.

Additional information on the ABS approach to strategic management and its activities to reduce provider load are available from the ABS on request (see Appendix 15 for details).

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

ABS support for the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* was demonstrated during 1997–98 primarily through the provision of statistical information which is available to government

and community groups to assist in developing and monitoring strategies in relevant fields, and by taking action to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers in the collection of data.

The ABS work program takes account of the *Charter* principles, and government needs for information to support social justice policies, by the identification of target groups in surveys and the collection of particular data, which enables agencies to measure the effectiveness of their programs. In 1997–98 the ABS published a wide range of statistics relevant to social justice and equity. These included major releases of data from the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Social Atlases for each capital city, publications relating specifically to the Indigenous population of Australia, and statistics on mental health, families, income, and housing costs. The ABS also released the fifth edition of the annual report *Australian Social Trends 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0), and the first in a series of social reports on special groups in the population, entitled *Youth Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0), focusing on the well-being of youth.

Community awareness of and access to statistical information is enhanced by the ABS providing an extensive range of material, at no cost, to public libraries across Australia. Basic statistics are also made available through the provision of complimentary publications to major news media organisations. A number of the ABS's public relations activities are aimed at encouraging an awareness among ethnic and Indigenous groups of its activities and services. In developing its work program the ABS consults extensively with governments and community groups so that it can respond appropriately to identified needs for statistics to address the social justice and equity objectives of these users.

The ABS began developing its Workplace Diversity Program which will promote through various means the appreciation and utilisation of the skills and experience which all staff bring to the workplace. The program will complement the continuing commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) which, during the year, included the ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy, the Harassment Contact Officers' Network and activities for members of EEO identified groups.

A detailed statement on ABS contributions and outcomes in relation to social justice and equity is available on request (see Appendix 15 for details).

SERVICE CHARTERS

The ABS has two very distinct groups of 'clients': those who provide information for statistical purposes, and those who use the products and services produced from that information. Service charters were developed for each during 1997–98. The *Business Surveys Charter* focuses on the relationship between the ABS and businesses which provide information for statistical purposes. A series of focus groups comprising representatives of small business interests provided valuable guidance on the expectations of the ABS's business respondents which assisted in determining the content of the Charter. The relationship between the ABS and the people and organisations

which use ABS statistics or statistical services is the subject of the *Client Service Charter*. It too has been developed through discussion and consultation with members of its target readership.

Both Charters state, in clear and simple language, the level and quality of service clients can expect in their dealings with the ABS. They also provide clients with information on how to access services, resolve problems, make complaints and provide feedback to the ABS on its performance.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

The ABS forward work program is subject to both internal and external scrutiny.

Internal scrutiny of the work program and general ABS operations takes the form of:

- Periodic reviews of statistical collections and service functions. In reviews of statistical collections, external users are widely consulted and in some instances, external users assist the review team. Several reviews commenced or were completed in 1997–98, including reviews of the Consumer Price Index, the international investment survey, the engineering construction survey, methodology for producing population estimates for small areas, population survey practices, the survey of income and housing costs, publishing arrangements and corporate services functions.
- Annual reports from all Branch Heads (in Central Office) and Regional Directors (in Regional Offices) to the Division Heads Meeting (comprising the Australian Statistician, Deputy Australian Statisticians and Division Heads). The reports cover the activities of the Branch or Office for the previous year, emerging issues and strategies, and indicators of performance.
- An internal audit program, conducted by external service providers, covering different facets of ABS operations. A number of compliance and performance audits commenced or were completed in 1997–98, including payments to agents, payroll allowances and entitlements, IT purchases, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland Offices, accounts receivable (follow up review of the 1996–97 audit), the ABS's subscriptions management system, IT planning and internal cost recovery, logical and physical security, contingency and business resumption planning, the ABS Database and Census IT infrastructure. Internal audit recommendations are reported to an Audit Committee chaired by the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division. The Audit Committee establishes the audit work program.

External scrutiny of the ABS takes the following forms:

- Consideration by ASAC of ABS priorities and proposals for the forward work program. ASAC advises the Statistician and the Treasurer, and produces its own annual report of issues considered and advice given.

- Audits by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), either of ABS operations specifically or as part of across portfolio studies. In 1997–98, ANAO reviewed the ABS financial statements and conducted two assurance and control assessment audits (travel and credit cards).

The review of statistical activity by various advisory committees and user groups is another important form of external scrutiny. These include:

- User groups established to advise the ABS on the concepts, content and dissemination programs of individual major household surveys.
- Advisory boards established for three national statistical centres which provide advice on statistical priorities and data standards, and which monitor and support the implementation of agreed collections in the areas of crime and justice, culture and recreation and Indigenous people. The forward work programs for the statistical centres are usually agreed between the Statistician and the board. The boards may also be supported by an expert technical advisory group.
- Standing expert advisory groups, comprising key government, business, academic and community group representatives, provide advice on statistical priorities and developments in particular fields, eg labour statistics.
- Commonwealth/State working groups or committees, often attached to Ministerial Councils, which provide advice on emerging needs, priorities and areas for cooperation.
- Ad hoc groups brought together to provide advice on some aspect of statistical development or priorities.

The ABS acknowledges the valuable contribution made by the many representatives of the user community in freely providing their time and advice. Of particular note has been the contribution made by members of the Economic Statistics User Group, the Labour Statistics Advisory Group, and the CPI Review Advisory Group.

Information on Freedom of Information, Inquiries by Parliamentary Committees, and Documents Tabled in Parliament is available in Appendixes 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

There were no adverse comments from the ANAO, Ombudsman, courts or tribunals during 1997–98.

SECURITY

The ABS maintains a comprehensive security framework, overseen by a Protective Security Management Committee chaired by the First Assistant Statistician, Technology Services Division.

The legal requirements not to divulge identifiable information, and the strong confidentiality and security ethos which permeates the attitudes

of ABS staff, are the most important elements of the ABS security screen. They are reinforced by a range of measures relating to the perimeter security of all ABS offices, the security measures protecting the ABS computing environment from any external access, and the security measures implemented for individual ABS data holdings.

Some features of the major elements of the security framework are described below.

Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy under the *Census and Statistics Act*

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* obliges ABS staff to maintain the confidentiality and security of all data reported to and held by the ABS. Staff sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy under the terms of the Act. The personal responsibility of all staff is a crucial element of ABS culture; it is the foundation upon which the security of ABS data holdings is built.

The ABS has an enviable reputation for the preservation of the confidentiality of reported data, and for the protection of its statistical data holdings from unauthorised release. There have been no known cases of any ABS officer breaching the undertaking of fidelity and secrecy.

Physical Security

All ABS premises are physically secure against unauthorised access. Entry is through electronically controlled access systems activated by individual coded keys. In addition, particularly sensitive output data, and the staff handling them, are located in physically isolated areas which are protected by further electronic access systems.

Computer Security

Access to ABS computing systems is based on personal identifiers that are password protected. The computer systems are regularly monitored and usage audited.

Additional access control systems are used to protect any data designated 'sensitive'. Access to sensitive data is only granted under the authority of area line management (the 'owners' of the data) on the basis that access is required by the staff member to carry out his or her work duties.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

Documents which provide additional information on the operations of the ABS and which are available on request include:

- ABS Corporate Plan;
- Forward Work Program 1998–99 to 2000–01;
- Business Surveys Charter;

- Client Service Charter; and
- ABS News (staff magazine).

In addition, a wide range of information is available on the ABS Statsite at <http://www.abs.gov.au> including statistical data, news releases, and conceptual and technical information.

2 THE DESTRUCTION OF CENSUS FORMS

BACKGROUND

On 25 May 1998 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs tabled the report of its inquiry into the treatment of census forms, *Saving our census and preserving our history*. The Committee concluded that name-identified information contained in future census forms should be retained, and be made generally available after 99 years.

The Government is considering its response to the Committee's report, so it is inappropriate for the ABS to comment on 'where to from here'.

However, the report, the submissions made to the Committee, the Hansards of the Committee's deliberations, speeches made by members of the Committee in Parliament, press releases issued by the Chairman of the Committee and several media comments are all in the public arena. In this public material are many comments, assertions and accusations which are critical of the ABS, the position it took and the role it played in the review.

The purposes of this chapter are to refute many of those comments and to briefly summarise the ABS's view.

ABS RESPONSIBILITY

The relationship between the Committee members and ABS representatives was poor from the first public hearing. It would seem the Committee members had not expected the ABS to take one side of the debate and to argue strongly in its initial submission for the continued destruction of census forms. Yet in doing so the ABS was doing the very job Parliament has given it.

The ABS is a statutory authority set up under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* to provide, amongst other things, statistics for the Governments of Australia and for the community generally. As the statutory head of the ABS, the Australian Statistician is responsible to the Parliament for providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service to inform debate, decision making and research both within governments and the wider community. These statistics also offer a window on the work and performance of governments, showing the scale of activity in every area of public policy, and allow the impact of government policies and actions to be assessed. In short, reliable economic and social statistics produced by the ABS are fundamental to open government.

Within this context, the Census of Population and Housing, which by law is to be taken every five years, is a most important event, some would argue the most important single collection run by the ABS.

The ABS's initial submission to the inquiry reflects its strongly held view that the retention of census forms will impact adversely on the

quality of census data, and possibly adversely impact the quality of other ABS statistical outputs. The Australian Statistician would have neglected his responsibilities if he had not made such a submission.

It would seem by the end of the review, the role of the ABS and the Australian Statistician was either still not understood or was just not appreciated. Speaking at the tabling of the report in Parliament, a member of the Committee made the following contradictory statement:

I have come to the conclusion that the ABS, under its present leadership, would not be able to provide professionally detached and independent advice to the government on the manner in which retention can be achieved without compromising the integrity of the census ... [Hansard, House of Representatives, pp. 3534–5.]

THE ABS POSITION

The ABS position on the retention of census forms was argued in an article in its 1995–96 Annual Report, and is set out in two submissions it made to the Committee. They are on the public record and listed as submissions 173 and 291, and they can be accessed on the ABS Website at <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

From a statistical perspective the central issue is whether the retention of name-identified census forms will increase the proportion of Australians who do not fill in their census form and/or who do not complete it accurately.

- *there is significant public opposition to the retention of census forms*

The ABS has commissioned market research before every census in the past 20 years to support the development of a communications strategy. In addition, after each census, feedback has been obtained from Census Collectors on their perception of the public's attitude to census taking. This research has consistently shown that Australians are concerned about putting their names and addresses on forms which might be kept, and they do not trust government guarantees about privacy and confidentiality.

As a part of this ongoing research, in September 1996 (well before any thought was given to the Committee's inquiry) the ABS commissioned AGB•McNair^(a) to undertake research about public attitudes to census form retention. This research showed there is very significant public opposition to the retention of census forms.

Specifically:

- 89% of respondents agreed that 'Census forms should be destroyed to protect people's privacy and confidentiality';

^(a) Now ACNielsen-McNair

- 67% disagreed that 'Census forms should be stored for release in future for research purposes';
- Between 34% and 45% said they would be less likely to complete a Census form if forms were kept for release at some time in the future;
- Between 38% and 49% said the information on the Census form would be less accurate if forms were kept for release;
- 73% disagreed that 'Researchers should be given access to Census forms including names and addresses'.

The findings of the AGB•McNair survey are consistent with other quantitative and qualitative evidence obtained from ABS consultation with the community about all recent censuses, feedback from Census Collectors, and other empirical indicators of community attitudes to privacy and confidentiality, such as the increasing proportion of people and households opting to use privacy envelopes. They are also consistent with all the ABS research and other sponsored market research conducted over the past 20 years.

At a hearing on 2 September 1997, the findings of this survey were attacked by some members of the Committee. In the process two members of the Committee accused AGB•McNair and the ABS of colluding to produce data which supported the destruction of census forms. This insult was vigorously refuted. The Australian Statistician said:

Mr Chairman, I would like to object. I think it is a bit unfair to suggest that the ABS or AGB•McNair would engineer something. I think it cuts rather heavily at my integrity and that of the organisation, and I really think it is a bit unfortunate these terms are being used. [House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Inquiry into the Treatment of Census Forms, *Transcript* p. 18.]

The AGB•McNair representative at that hearing was concerned by this unfounded and ill-judged attack on his and his company's integrity. As a result he decided, without any consultation with the ABS and at AGB•McNair expense, to repeat the essential part of the survey after making some technical changes to the survey instrument to meet some of the queries Committee members had put forward. The revised survey was run in September 1997, and AGB•McNair advised the Committee that 'the message is still the same and just as clear—the majority of the people want the census forms destroyed'. The survey clearly showed that the strong opposition to census form retention continued even 12 months after the 1996 Census. This should have put to rest the claims that the original survey was biased, or that the ABS and AGB•McNair had colluded to produce data which supports the ABS position.

Instead, the Committee chose to dismiss the survey findings out of hand. In doing so it made the following astonishing claim, particularly given the almost pervasive use of polling (attitudinal surveys) by all political parties:

The Committee has considerable reservations about some evidence presented by the ABS from attitudinal surveys conducted on its behalf. The Committee formed the view that attitudinal surveys in general, and these surveys in particular, do not provide a sound basis for judgment. [para 7.11]^(b)

That the Committee dismissed the evidence is perhaps not surprising given the uncompromising stance taken by a leading member of the Committee:

Mr Mutch—The Australian Bureau of Statistics did not produce a single shred of credible evidence to support its contention that the retention of name-identified data would herald the end of the world as we now know it. To the contrary, ABS commissioned two self-serving surveys which were viewed with incredulity by committee members ... [Hansard, House of Representatives, p. 3534.]

This was said despite the fact that the public record shows that the evidence presented to the inquiry was extensive, the first AGB•McNair survey was not commissioned by the ABS for the purposes of the inquiry, and rather than being commissioned by the ABS, the second survey was actually run by AGB•McNair at their own expense as a direct result of the Committee suggesting there was collusion between AGB•McNair and the ABS, and without anyone in the ABS knowing about it.

(Notwithstanding, the Committee did use results from the survey to support its own point of view when it said: 'A survey conducted by AGB•McNair for the 1996 Census found that 14 per cent of people aware of the Census said they would be more likely to fill in a census form if forms were to be retained'. [para 3.89])

Both ABS and AGB•McNair believe these survey results are valid and are a robust indicator of the public's perception of census taking.

- *the collection of names and addresses is a sensitive issue for many Australians*

In 1971 the then Treasurer (Rt. Hon. B.M. Snedden, MP) ordered that all census forms held by the ABS be destroyed and that the forms from the 1971 Census be destroyed as soon as statistical processing

^(b) Paragraph references are to the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into the Treatment of Census Forms, *Saving our census and preserving our history*, May 1998.

was completed. This action was prompted by privacy concerns following an extended public debate. This debate had been stimulated by the newly formed Australia Party, which had attacked the requirement for names and addresses on census forms, and by earlier publicity about anti-census campaigns overseas.

The public debate that took place in the 1980s about the Australia Card also shows how easily the population's attitudes can be inflamed over privacy concerns. More recently, the 1996 Census experience shows the ease with which privacy issues can be brought into the open with a number of unfounded statements about privacy and the conduct of the Australian census being picked up by the media.

The continuing concern has been about providing names and addresses, not so much the answering of questions on the census forms. Perceptions about the capacity of computers to store and manipulate vast amounts of information, and fears about matching identifiable data from different sources contribute to this increasing concern. Fears about potential future mis-use of census information fuel these concerns.

Rebutting these claims was certainly assisted by the ABS being able to assure householders that census data would be kept confidential, that names and addresses would not be held on computers, and that the forms would be destroyed once the statistical information had been captured. Rebutting such claims would have been more difficult if the long standing practice of destroying census forms had just been reversed.

The Privacy Commissioner, Ms Moira Scollay, advised the Committee that:

The ABS collects an extensive amount of personal information during censuses and the only way to guarantee that the privacy of that information will be protected is if the information is destroyed as soon as possible. Any other treatment of census forms will create some degree of risk to the privacy of individuals. [para 2.42]

The very strong concerns the ABS expressed about the privacy aspects of collecting census data, and the many comments the Privacy Commissioner made about the need for the Information Privacy Principles to be followed, seem to have been disregarded by the Committee. The Committee's lack of understanding of this important community attitude is shown starkly by its views on how the name-identified records should be stored and accessed. In the conclusion of its report the Committee says it

prefers the option of storage of the records (including names and addresses) in electronic form. This method of storage would utilise the electronic record of responses from each census form which ABS currently produces and retains. Electronic storage would make it easier for researchers to use the records and to compare them to other pieces of information. [para 7.48]

The Committee also failed to understand how the public might view its recommendations that *during* the 99 year closed access period, the identified census records should be matched with other identified health records to produce aggregate data to support epidemiological research. Having this exception to the 'no-access before 99 years' rule raises the prospect of other exceptions being made. This possibility, along with the public's belief that governments, in general, cannot be trusted to honour commitments, especially in the longer term, could create a very difficult privacy climate for the collection of census data.

The fundamental concern the Australian public has with government (big brother) having electronic copies of name and address identified information stored in computers, which can be manipulated and matched with other data, has been ignored or, at best, forgotten.

THE IMPLICATIONS

The Committee's view is that it 'was not persuaded by the evidence that [the reduced level and quality of response] would be significant or substantial' [para 7.10]. In coming to this conclusion [paras 7.3-7.12] the Committee discounted evidence of the impact of data quality problems referred to by the Australian Electoral Commission, the Commonwealth Grants Commission, a number of State Premiers and State agencies, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, the Statistical Society of Australia, a number of major Commonwealth Departments (including Treasury, the Department of Social Security, and the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs), and the Privacy Commissioner, as well as by the ABS. Instead, it cited and gave weight to the views of genealogical and academic researchers even though they were not experienced in the field of census taking (indeed having no relevant experience), and they also had a vested interest in the outcome.

Rather, the facts suggest there would be a significant increase in non-response and a lower quality response if census forms are retained. The implications are serious.

- *accuracy of census data would be adversely affected*

The evidence presented by the ABS showed there is very strong public support for the continued destruction of census forms. Even if one assumes an effective public relations campaign would convince 90 per cent of those opposing form retention to cooperate in the census, a non-response of 10 per cent or more could be the result in the next census. This in effect would mean the results would lack credibility and be subject to considerable public criticism about data quality, as overseas experience has shown.

Further, with the AGB•McNair survey showing 63 per cent of people disagreeing with the statement that 'Future governments can be trusted to honour guarantees of confidentiality made today regarding Census forms', this lack of co-operation with census taking could be even higher should civil liberty and privacy groups mount a substantial

campaign, or a political party fan the fires of concern for some political gain. **Unfortunately, these possibilities are very real. This has been shown in Germany and the Netherlands where censuses have had to be abandoned as a result of public pressures.**

There can be no doubt that such a high level of non-response, quite likely of uneven impact across different segments of the community, and the lower quality of the responses received, would immeasurably damage the quality of census data. In turn, this would impact on the value of the census to the many State and Commonwealth government agencies, businesses and others who use the census to support their planning and delivery of services. As the accuracy of State population estimates relies in large measure on the accuracy of the census counts, the reliability of State population estimates will be affected as well.

- *impact on electoral representations*

A High Court decision in the Electoral Case [(*Attorney-General*) (*Cth*) (*Ex rel McKinlay*) v *The Commonwealth* (1975) 135 CLR 1] held that the Constitution requires that the population of the various States needs to be ascertained during the life of each ordinary Parliament for the purpose of determining the number of members from each State in the House of Representatives. An opinion of the then Law Officers, Attorney-General (Mr Ellicott) and Solicitor-General (Mr Byers), on the High Court decision in February 1976 said:

it necessarily follows that the States' respective populations **be reliably determined** [emphasis added]. For this some method of counting the population such as a periodical census is essential. [para 3.56]

They further added:

We do not think a triennial population census geared to ordinary general elections is required by the decision ... If, as at present, quinquennial counts alone are taken, the decision requires that statistical estimates of the populations of the States are taken during the life of each ordinary or triennial Parliament and reasonably close to its determination ... [para 3.57]

The High Court decision and the Law Officers' opinion led to the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* which require five-yearly censuses, and quarterly State population estimates.

The accuracy of State population estimates relies in large measure on the accuracy of the census counts. This accuracy would be directly threatened by reduced levels of cooperation in the census and/or biased responses. The Law Officers' opinion would suggest that a reduction in the accuracy of State and Territory population estimates could afford ground for the High Court to hold that the number of each State's members in the House of Representatives is not in proportion to its population, as required by the Constitution. As the Australian Electoral Commission, supported by the Australian Joint Roll Council, warned the Committee:

such constitutional litigation could throw into doubt, at least for a time, the validity of a determination of representational entitlements, and could also constrain the calling of an election where the litigation was before the court ... [para 3.59]

The consequences of such a serious possibility do not seem to have been given due weight by the Committee in reaching its conclusions.

- *Commonwealth grants to the States*

Under the *States Grants (General Purposes) Act 1994*, the Commonwealth Grants Commission bases its allocation of Commonwealth funds to the States and Territories on ABS population estimates. In 1997–98 the amount to be distributed was estimated at \$21 billion. If State and Territory population estimates are less accurate because of reduced or biased response in the census, **the result is likely to be a misallocation of funds**. Underestimating one State's share of the total population by just 0.1 per cent (about 18,000 people) could reduce that State's allocation by \$21 million per annum. Not surprisingly, States monitor the process carefully and are quick to complain, both publicly and privately, if they perceive any weaknesses.

Although it dismisses these concerns, the Committee reports:

The [Commonwealth Grants] Commission was concerned that any reduction in the accuracy of the census information could have significant effects on the budgets of the States and Territories. This concern was also expressed by the Queensland and South Australian Premiers and the ACT Chief Minister. [para 3.66]

- *consequences for official statistics*

There is no doubt that the quality and the high level of co-operation that the ABS receives in its statistical collections is based in no small part on the trust respondents have in the ABS. Cooperation in the census, and indeed in most statistical collections, is higher in Australia than in most other countries. This has contributed to the high international reputation of Australia's official statistics.

The ABS and its predecessor organisations have always attached a high priority to preventing the disclosure of personal information about identifiable individuals. Indeed, the confidentiality provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* ensure that the ABS cannot release identifiable personal and domestic information.

The ABS is proud of its record in maintaining the confidentiality of information that has been entrusted to it. As the Head of the Privacy Branch in the Privacy Commissioner's Office put it '**the ABS is probably the only Commonwealth agency whose assurance of confidentiality means what they say ...**' The ABS appears to have an

excellent record in relation to this assurance' [address to the Advisory Council on Australian Archives, 1991]. The ABS considers this record is fundamental to the success of its continuing operations.

The trust respondents have in the ABS is based on whether or not the ABS does what it says it will do, especially with respect to confidentiality and security of the data it collects, and also on the perception respondents have in this regard. A change in what has been a fundamental tenet of census taking in Australia, the destruction of census forms, could impact unfavourably on this perception. It is false logic to argue, as some Committee members did, that privacy concerns would be alleviated completely if the identified records are kept secret for a long period; this is shown starkly by the problems the United Kingdom had in conducting its last census. Any diminution in the trust of respondents would impact unfavourably on the quality and level of response the ABS receives not just in the census, but in all its statistical collection activities.

Evidence given to the Committee on 4 September 1997 by Mr David Borthwick, then a Deputy Secretary in the Treasury, is pertinent:

MR MUTCH (Acting Chair)—Your evidence goes to an apprehension that the accuracy and the quality of the record could be diminished. It is an apprehension of a risk of diminution. Is that right?

Mr Borthwick—That is exactly an accurate description of our view. I think it is a risk that needs to be weighed very carefully because of the pervasiveness to which the census underpins our statistics. In the words that I think we used in our submission, we think there is a material risk—not just a risk but a very real risk—that our statistical base will be eroded. [House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Inquiry into the Treatment of Census Forms, *Transcript* p. 62.]

COSTS OF RETENTION

The Committee did not take into account 'the cost of retention' in reaching its recommendations, as required by the terms of reference.

Treasury estimates that the cost of retaining census forms would be either \$14.5 million or \$22.45 million for each census, depending on whether the forms were kept electronically or microfilmed. The Committee 'believes the cost of either option is not prohibitive' [para 7.47] even though the gain is a private benefit to future genealogists in 100 years time. **The ABS could identify many important statistical initiatives that it believes have significantly higher priority and public benefit should such funds be available.** For example, such a sum would enable the ABS to conduct an additional major household survey each year along the lines of the National Health Survey, or the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

OTHER RELATED MATTERS

- *'collusion amongst government agencies'*

The Committee made the following observation in its report:

The Committee formed the impression that the submissions from these agencies [mainly Commonwealth and State Government agencies] were drafted principally at the impetus of a letter sent to them by ABS highlighting its fears that data quality of the census would decline. The Committee noted that many of the submissions used expressions like those contained in the ABS letter. While a similar practice was apparent to a greater extent amongst genealogical associations, the Committee was concerned that what it regards as virtually solicitation and collusion should occur amongst government agencies. [para 3.105]

The ABS views this accusation very seriously. (It also simply notes the uneven treatment of the two sides of the argument.) To this end it is worth considering the actual interchange on this matter which occurred in the hearing on 25 September 1997:

MR RANDALL—We have had an enormous number of government agencies appear before this committee, such as Treasury and the Commonwealth Grants Commission, all government agencies that support your position, yet the private people who come before us seem to have a contrary view. My impression is, from the information I believe I have gleaned, that there is an inference, if anything—certainly I believe it has been said off the record—that they feel somewhat intimidated by yourself to follow your line; that you have contacted them, given them the surveys and asked them to put in a submission supporting you, otherwise you will be less than forthcoming in the future.

Mr McLennan—That is certainly not true. What is true is that we did write to all major users and told them that the inquiry was on and told them that, in our view, if census forms were kept there would be a problem with non-response and that it would be in their interest to tell you how important these census statistics are to them. If I did not do that, I think I would be remiss in my duties as the Australian Statistician.

MR RANDALL—I just want to say, in summing up, that from those four instances—and you have not agreed with any of them—if there was any truth to them it would be seen as intimidatory bureaucratic thuggery by yourself, wouldn't it?

Mr McLennan—I am not too sure. I must have a pretty bad reputation if you think I can intimidate blokes like Ted Evans, et cetera. I think the reality of life in the Public Service is that the Statistician is quite low down the pecking order. In the life of the bureaucracy in terms of serving state governments, Commonwealth public servants are quite a low form of life.

MR RANDALL—So are politicians.

Mr McLennan—I think statisticians might be down a bit lower.
[House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional
Affairs, Inquiry into the Treatment of Census Forms, *Transcript* pp. 379-380.]

The relevant point here is that it was the duty of the ABS to inform all major users the inquiry was being conducted, to let them know of ABS concerns about possible impacts on data quality, and to suggest they should take these factors into account if they were to make a submission to the inquiry. A formal letter along these lines could in no way be described as underhand. **The Australian Statistician does not resilé from this position.**

It is indeed disappointing that based on such peculiar logic it would seem the Committee chose to ignore all the important evidence presented by the major users of census data.

- *impartiality of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)*

ASAC is a separate statutory authority established under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* to advise the Minister and the Statistician on statistical priorities and statistical matters generally. It consists of the Chairperson, currently Mr John Macleod, the Statistician, representatives of each State Premier and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, and up to 14 other members, who are selected to give a wide representation of statistical users and suppliers.

Mr Macleod appeared before the Committee on 18 September 1997 emphasising the points made in the Council's submission in support of the destruction of census forms, noting in particular that Council had formed this view in respect of each census since Council was formed in 1976. He particularly stressed that Council members were widely representative of society, and were people of stature.

In its report, the Committee said:

The Committee also had some concerns about the independence of the ASAC from ABS. The Committee observed that ASAC is based in the same offices as ABS and that its secretariat is drawn from officers of ABS. ASAC's chairman, Mr John Macleod, advised the Committee that ASAC is quite independent. Nonetheless, the Committee holds reservations about its impartiality. [para 3.107]

These comments about the lack of impartiality of Mr Macleod and the other eminent members of ASAC are not only deplorable and insulting, but manifestly untrue. Importantly, the Committee had no basis for maligning Council in this way. It would seem the reservations about its impartiality have been manufactured to discount the strong evidence of Mr Macleod and the views of ASAC.

(It is instructive to contrast the view the Committee had of the Advisory Council on Australian Archives with its view of ASAC. Although the Advisory Council on Australian Archives has almost the same relationship with the Australian Archives as ASAC has with the ABS, and very similar operating practices, including secretariat and meeting arrangements, no questions were raised of its independence from the Australian Archives. Also, the then Chair of the Advisory Council on Australian Archives, Mr Rodney Cavalier, was treated with respect, his evidence accepted and given due weight; this, of course, is as it should have been. This contrasts starkly with the treatment handed out to the members of ASAC, including Mr Macleod.)

THE LAST WORDS

Two quotes summarise the view the ABS has consistently put forward: one is by a past bureaucrat, the other by an un-named Australian citizen.

The former Privacy Commissioner, Mr Kevin O'Connor, consistently supported the policy of census form destruction. In a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, dated 12 July 1996, Mr O'Connor summarised the privacy concern very well, saying:

I have consistently supported, on privacy grounds, the longstanding government policy which is that the census forms are destroyed after the processing is complete.

The Bureau of Statistics fully complies with the privacy principle that personal information should only be used for the purpose for which it is obtained, and this has contributed to a high level of community trust. If the forms were retained, that trust would most likely be significantly diminished, leading to a reduced level of accuracy, and undermining the important objectives of the census. It would also, in my view, be an undesirable intrusion into the lives of all Australians. However strong the assurances initially given about confidentiality during the 'closed access' period, the Bureau would inevitably come under severe pressure to make exceptions for other public interests. There would also be differing opinions about the length of time before the forms were made available ... the aggregate census results are of course already a major and valuable research resource. Long term access to identifiable details would be an additional use at the margin. In my view, the present policy strikes the right balance of public interests.

A citizen, who for privacy reasons should remain un-named, wrote to a Minister on 28 May 1998 as follows:

I note with alarm and dismay the news that 'an all-party parliamentary committee ... on legal and constitutional affairs has recommended the practice of destroying original census records should be overturned.' (p 5 *The Australian*, Tuesday May 26 1998).

Ian Henderson's article begins: 'Census information, identifying the individual, will be available to the public after 99 years, if the Howard Government adopts ...' this proposal.

Sir, if governments of any colour want accurate data re every resident of this country through the traditional Census, and only the ignorant or the fool doubts that such is needed, the perpetual confidentiality of this information is of fundamental importance.

No confidentiality—no accuracy.

You breach confidentiality—you invite dishonesty.

I have no doubt that we, the public, are cynical about the envisaged '99 years'. Even if immediate governments are sincere and honour such a term, the break in the absolute confidentiality would the more easily seduce latter-day 'big brothers' to shorten the length of confidentiality.

Remember the Australia Card, sir?

Sir, don't forget it!

The language is different, and the position each is coming from is different, but the message is the same.

3 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PRICE AND LABOUR COST INDEXES

The high profile consumer price index (CPI) is the best known of the suite of price measures produced by the ABS. It has traditionally played a major role in providing input to wage and salary setting negotiations, as well as being used for the indexation of pensions and superannuation payments and government taxes and charges.

Along with the range of producer and international trade price indexes, and measures of wage costs, the CPI is also used extensively for a range of other applications such as contract escalation, deriving constant price or 'real' national accounts statistics and making international comparisons. Although not designed specifically for the purpose, in recent years the CPI has increasingly been used as a general measure of inflation for purposes of economic management.

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

A number of significant external developments over recent years have provided catalysts for the ABS to re-evaluate its prices statistics program with a view to ensuring it continues to deliver a relevant, cohesive and high quality statistical service. Some of the major developments include:

- An increased focus on containing inflation as an economic policy imperative. The Reserve Bank now administers monetary policy with the objective of keeping underlying inflation within the range of 2% to 3% over the business cycle.
- Structural and compositional changes in wage fixing arrangements with the move away from award-based centralised wage fixing in favour of agreements at the enterprise, workplace and individual employee level. These changes have reduced the reliability of statistics such as average weekly earnings (AWE) and the former award rates of pay indexes (ARPI) in measuring real changes in labour costs which are important indicators of future inflationary pressures.
- Structural changes in the composition and method of operation of the Australian economy due to factors such as increasing globalisation, strong growth in the role of service industries and industry deregulation.
- Increasing demands for high quality national accounts and prices data as performance measures in their own right and to support productivity studies in both the market and non-market sectors of the economy. As a result the ABS is reviewing, improving and extending data sources and methods in these fields of statistics. Chapter 2 of the 1995–96 ABS Annual Report contained an outline of the strategy adopted for improving the quality of the national accounts.

- An articulation of community requirements in the field of prices statistics through extensive consultation processes associated with the recent public review of the CPI and discussions with users on an ABS information paper entitled *An Analytical Framework for Price Indexes in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6421.0).
- Extensive international debate and research into index collection and construction techniques by statistical agencies, academic institutions and statistical arms of international organisations. A strong stimulus was provided with the release in the United States of America of the *Final Report to the US Senate Finance Committee, from the Advisory Committee To Study The Consumer Price Index* (referred to as the Boskin report) in December 1996. One of the major conclusions of that report was that the USA CPI had a significant upward bias.

MAJOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Consumer Price Index

In order to ensure the CPI continues to meet community needs, the ABS has regularly reviewed it since it was first compiled. These reviews update the item weights and provide an opportunity to reassess the scope and coverage of the index and other methodological issues.

The CPI was introduced in 1960 and was preceded by a series of indexes starting in 1912. It was developed with the principal purpose of providing input to the highly centralised wage and salary determination process which prevailed in Australia until recently. As it aimed to measure changes in the purchasing power of wage and salary earner household incomes, it adopted what is known as an *outlays*, or *payments*, approach.

Although not designed specifically for the purpose, the increased policy focus on achieving price stability has resulted in the CPI increasingly being used as a general measure of inflation. As it is not possible to produce a single measure that is entirely suitable for both income adjustment and the measurement of inflation, a crucial issue for the latest (13th series) review, which was undertaken during 1997–98, was deciding whether the CPI should continue to be designed for its original purpose, or whether it should be redesigned to provide a better measure of general inflation. Other issues addressed during the course of this review included the frequency of compilation and publication, the population and geographic coverage and the commodity classification.

To facilitate user consultation on these issues, an information paper entitled *Issues To Be Considered During The 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review* (ABS Cat. no. 6451.0) was released in May 1997. Extensive public consultation was then undertaken and a CPI Review Advisory Group, which represented a range of important users, provided advice.

Since the previous CPI review, the context in which the CPI is used has changed. Containing inflation is attracting much more focus as an economic policy imperative. Also, there has been a continuing trend towards decentralised, enterprise level wage and salary setting arrangements with the outcomes focussed on the commercial circumstances of individual businesses. This has led to a decline in the importance of the CPI for income adjustment purposes.

Following the consultation process, the ABS concluded that, on balance, the Australian community would now be better served by a CPI designed to provide a general measure of price inflation for the household sector as a whole. The decisions taken as a result of the review were presented in an information paper entitled *Outcome of the 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 6453.0), released in November 1997. The 13th series CPI will therefore be specifically designed as a general measure of household inflation. Accordingly, an *acquisitions* approach will be adopted for the construction of the index and it will utilise a weighting pattern representative of *all* private households in the eight capital cities. Furthermore, some important methodological changes will be made to improve the accuracy of the CPI.

The new CPI is first being compiled in respect of the September quarter 1998 with weights updated using results from the 1993–94 household expenditure survey. The most notable changes resulting from the adoption of the acquisitions approach are the exclusion of mortgage interest and consumer credit charges and the inclusion of expenditure on new dwellings (excluding land).

Recognising the widespread interest in the extent to which rates of change in the cost of living vary across different groups in the community, the ABS will also compile and publish analytical indexes specifically designed to measure changes in living costs for a range of population sub-groups. These indexes, which will be constructed using the *outlays* approach, will be published at approximately annual intervals. The particular population groups for which the indexes will be compiled will be determined after further consultation.

In response to the considerable public interest expressed in being able to make valid spatial comparisons of price levels across the capital cities, the ABS will introduce the facility to compile such comparisons as resources permit.

A NEW STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF INFLATION

In recent years there has been increasing international attention directed towards developing new approaches to the measurement of inflation, with reduced acceptance of the notion that any one single price index measure can adequately support a rigorous analysis of the complex inflation process.

The ABS has taken a major initiative in developing proposals for a system, or family, of price indexes which embraces the entire economy and provides for taking complementary views of the economy. These proposals are described in an information paper entitled *An Analytical Framework for Price Indexes in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6421.0) which was released in February 1997.

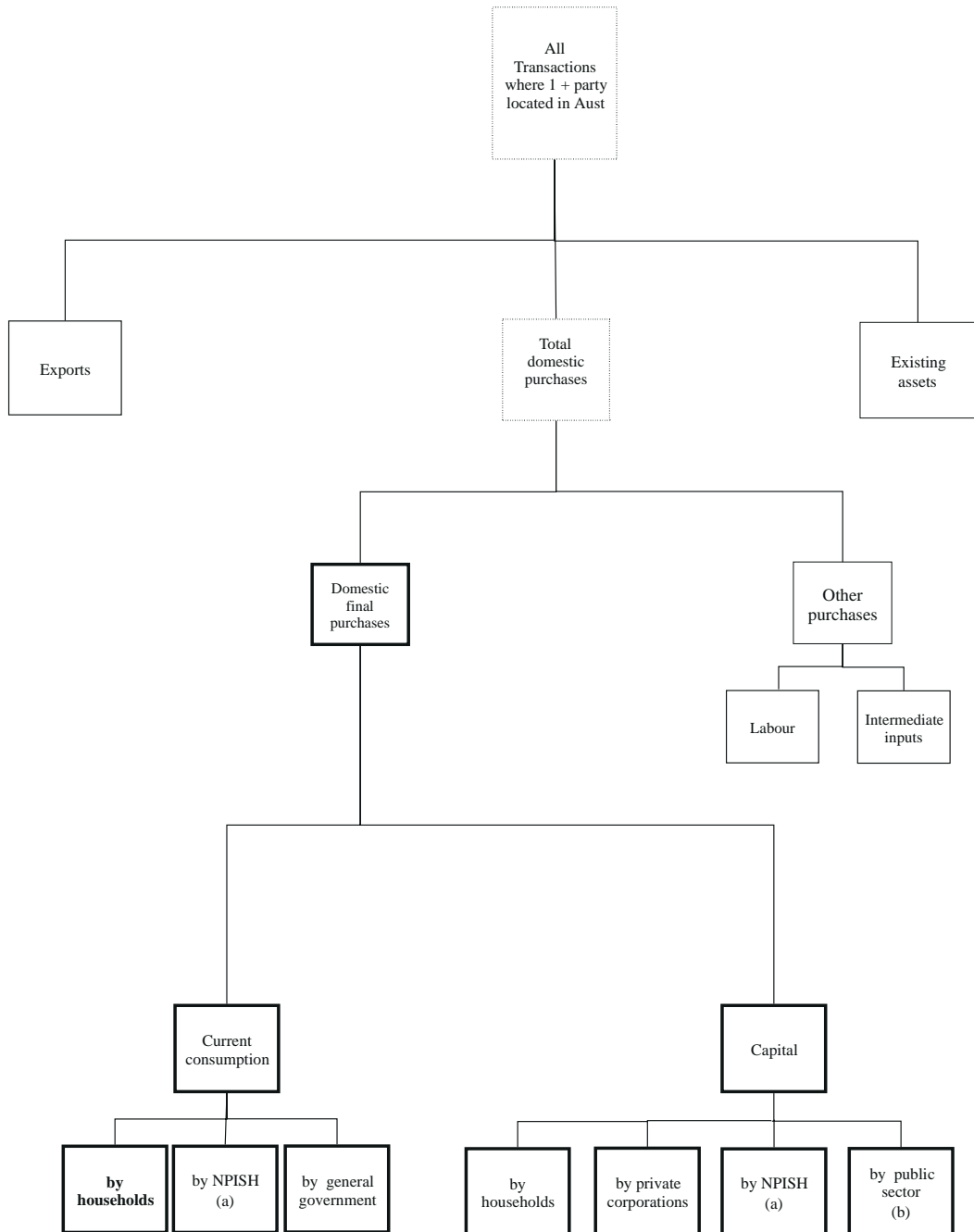
In the context of the lack of a generally agreed, precise macro-economic definition of inflation, the ABS has developed a *market transactions* approach to the construction of price indexes designed for the analysis of inflation. This approach is based on the premise that inflation in an economy is a phenomenon peculiar to the operation of markets: that is, that inflation results from the interaction of demand and supply factors in the market place.

However, in order to build up meaningful aggregate measures of inflation, it is necessary to conceptually allocate all the individual market transactions to specific market categories as shown in the diagram below. It is not valid simply to aggregate all the transactions taking place in the economy because of the distortions that would result from multiple counting as commodities flow through different stages of the production process.

The diagram shows the proposed categorisation of markets providing a broad level representation of all market transactions involving Australian residents. Each of the specific markets is shown in the lower part of the diagram, with summary aggregations of the markets in the upper part.

In theory, each of the markets shown on the diagram could be represented by a separate price index. However, the economic meaning of price indexes corresponding to such aggregations of market activity as *total domestic purchases* and *all transactions* is dubious as they would involve multiple counting through including a combination of intermediate and final transactions; they are shown here for illustrative purposes only. Rather, it is more meaningful to consider the market transactions framework as providing alternative, but complementary, views of the economy through different markets.

MARKET TRANSACTIONS VIEW OF THE ECONOMY



(a) Non-profit institutions serving households

(b) General government and public trading and financial enterprises

The first price index that could be designed for the analysis of inflation is the price index of domestic final purchases. The scope of this index would reflect purchases by Australian residents, including imported items. The measure would be based only on *final* market purchases, excluding all intermediate purchases. As such, the index would relate to the markets represented by 'domestic final purchases' in the diagram above and include both final consumption purchases and capital investment. It would be an economy-wide inflation measure.

The price index of domestic final purchases would be broken down into separate price indexes for consumption and capital purchases, which would be further split on an institutional sector basis (as defined in the 1993 *System of National Accounts*), i.e. households, corporate (private and public), general government and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. These components could be disaggregated further to provide price indexes for key sub-components under alternative classifications.

Because inflation is seen as a phenomenon of markets, the coverage of the domestic final purchases index would be confined to actual markets, where goods and services are exchanged at prices determined by the interaction of buyers and sellers. Goods and services which are acquired free of charge or at non-market determined prices would be excluded.

In response to the interest that policy makers have shown in measures of *underlying* inflation in recent years, the new framework also provides for the development of a measure of underlying inflation for the household sector. The most significant characteristic of such an analytical index series is that it would incorporate the results of a process of netting out the effects of any changes in indirect tax rates. These measures, known as net price indexes, are already produced in a number of other countries.

The domestic final purchases index forms part of the broader market transactions statistical framework which embraces a wider family of price indexes (see diagram). Complementary views of inflation are provided by the stage of production producer price indexes and the wage cost index (both described below) and the existing export price index.

A comprehensive consultation process on the proposals contained in the analytical framework information paper concluded that there is broad user support for the proposed initiatives. Therefore, ABS forward work program plans and priorities provide for these developments over the next few years. Initial work will focus on constructing the household consumption purchases index which is the major component of the domestic final purchases index. Net price index analytical series will also be prepared following detailed consultations with key stakeholders.

PRODUCER PRICE INDEXES

Stage of production framework

As the scope of the price index of domestic final purchases is confined to *final* transactions, it cannot provide a complete picture of the price experience of the economy. Some users are interested in price indexes which enable identification of price pressures arising from *intermediate* transactions, thus potentially identifying early inflationary signals. Such a complementary view would be provided by producer price indexes within a stage of production framework.

Experimental stage of production producer price indexes are being developed which will relate to the selling prices of the output of Australian industries at basic prices. That is, they will be output indexes viewed from the producers' perspective. Initial coverage will be restricted to the output of the goods producing industries (excluding construction) though, in the longer term, coverage can be extended. The aim is to augment the analytical value of the current range of partial producer and international trade price indexes through their presentation within an economy-wide framework. Commodity price flows can be categorised according to their economic destination on a sequential basis along the production chain, with the basis for categorisation being the Australian input-output tables. The primary index classification will be into final goods (i.e. goods destined for final consumption, capital formation or export), and intermediate goods (i.e. goods that flow into intermediate consumption for further processing). To aid analysis, the intermediate goods will be further split on a sequential basis between first stage and second stage intermediate goods, thus providing three stages of production.

Under this framework, first stage intermediate goods are used in the production of second stage intermediate goods; in turn, second stage intermediate goods flow into the production of final goods. For each of the three stages, separate indexes will be presented for domestic production and imports. The final goods will be further split into capital goods, consumer goods and exports.

The ABS plans to release later this year the experimental series along with explanatory material describing the stage of production concept and the methodology employed in the construction of the measures. The composition and weighting pattern and some basic analysis of the series will also be provided. This release will be used as a basis for consulting with users and obtaining feedback which may lead to modifications to the approach, classifications, etc.

Major coverage gaps will be progressively filled, in particular as data relating to the output of the service industries and the construction industry become available.

Price indexes for the output of the service industries and the construction industry

In recognition of the increasing economic contribution of service industries, substantial coverage advances have been made under a long term development program to establish producer price indexes for the wide and diverse range of industries in the service sector of the economy.

Experimental quarterly indexes have been established for most of the industry classes in the Transport and Storage Division and Property Services Subdivision of the ANZSIC industry classification. In the Business Services Subdivision, collections have also been established for several industry classes and there is currently work-in-progress on ten other industry classes. Work over the next two years will concentrate on consolidating the collections that have been set up, completing the work-in-progress and extending coverage into new service industries.

It is clear from early investigations, and experience overseas, that pricing the output of the construction industry, especially in relation to one-off engineering construction works, will not be straightforward. Many options will need to be explored and sometimes estimates, proxies or derived data may be the best available. It is intended to progressively work on developing indexes for different segments of the industry over the next few years.

These new indexes will play very important roles in enhancing the planned economy-wide price measures as well as assisting in improving the quality of the national accounts and supporting productivity studies.

Frequency of compilation

From the September quarter 1997, the frequency of the collection and processing cycle of the producer price indexes was changed from monthly to quarterly bringing it into line with the CPI. The opportunity was taken to redesign processes in order to achieve a permanent improvement of about three weeks in the timeliness of release of the producer price index publications.

WAGE COST INDEX

The ABS has undertaken a major development program to ensure that the 'price' of labour is measured effectively in order to support a wide range of applications including the analysis of inflation (see previous diagram).

With the decentralisation of wage fixing, and the role of awards being reduced to the status of a 'safety net' of minimum wages and conditions, the ABS's award rates of pay indexes (ARPI) were rendered inappropriate for measuring changes in wage rates. These indexes were designed to measure movements in award wage rates for those employees covered by awards. Since awards do not generally reflect wage outcomes from enterprise, workplace and individual agreements, the ARPI effectively ceased providing useful measures of change in the 'price' of labour. Accordingly, the ABS ceased publishing ARPI after the release of the June 1997 issue of *Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6312.0).

The ABS published the first quarterly movement of a new statistical series, the wage cost index (WCI), on 26 March 1998 in *Wage Cost Index, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6345.0). The WCI is an integrated set of quarterly indexes measuring changes in wage and salary costs for employee jobs, unaffected by changes in the quality and quantity of work performed. Index numbers are compiled from hourly wage and salary costs for a representative sample of employee jobs within a sample of employing organisations. Individual indexes are compiled for various combinations of State/Territory, sector (private/public), broad industry group and broad occupation group.

The WCI is an important addition to the range of economic indicators published regularly by the ABS. It will have widespread application in the analysis of monetary, fiscal and wage policies. The various indexes will enable analysts and policy makers to assess the impact of wage cost changes at the State/Territory, sector (private/public), broad industry and broad occupation levels. The WCI will also be used for contract escalation, as input to the wage and salary negotiation process and in the compilation of the national accounts.

The ABS's average weekly earnings (AWE) survey currently provides quarterly measures of average weekly earnings of employees, based on information collected from a sample of employing organisations. These are published in *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6301.0), which contains preliminary results each quarter, and *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6302.0), which contains the final results. The average weekly earnings estimates are computed by dividing estimates of total gross weekly earnings by estimates of the number of employees.

It is important to note that average weekly earnings estimates from the AWE survey are affected by compositional shifts in the employee workforce, by changes in average hours paid per employee, and by changes in the AWE survey sample selected each quarter from the ABS business register. The AWE survey can also give a distorted picture of movements in ordinary time earnings when, for example, overtime penalty payments or benefits such as leave loading are rolled into

ordinary wages and salaries as part of an enterprise or workplace agreement. None of these effects are present in the WCI as it has been designed to measure changes in the underlying price of labour.

The WCI represents the first stage in the development of the broader labour cost index (LCI) which will measure the combined effect of changes in wage costs and selected non-wage labour costs. The range of labour costs to be included in the LCI coincides with the national accounts measure of 'compensation of employees', together with the costs of fringe benefits tax and payroll tax. As described in the 1993 *System of National Accounts*, compensation of employees comprises wages and salaries in cash (for time worked as well as for paid leave), wages and salaries in kind (i.e. fringe benefits) and the value of social contributions payable by employers (e.g. for sickness, accident, redundancy, retirement). Thus, the LCI will build on the wage component, incorporating costs relating to employer funded superannuation, workers' compensation, payroll tax, fringe benefits tax and paid leave.

METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In the context of the considerable international debate and research into index collection and construction techniques, the ABS has established a research agenda aimed at ensuring that best practice is utilised in the production of Australia's official price and labour cost indexes. The main objective of the research is to optimise the accuracy and reliability of the measures. In particular, potential sources of bias in the indexes will be identified and strategies formulated to minimise any biases.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

The ABS currently participates in the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) Program conducted by the OECD. This study aims to provide internationally comparable price and volume estimates of final expenditure on gross domestic product for 32 countries. A key element of the exercise involves the direct pricing of similar baskets of goods and services in each of the participating countries, a task fraught with practical and conceptual complexities.

While accepting that there is a place for such measures in a fully functioning international statistical system, the ABS has for some time held significant reservations about the quality of the statistics produced.

The United Nations Statistical Commission agreed that the wider International Comparison Program, of which the PPP program is a component, should be reviewed, and the OECD decided that its program should also be reviewed. A report was subsequently produced for the OECD by former Australian Statistician, Ian Castles, which was very critical of some of the PPP results. As a result of these criticisms, the OECD is undertaking an audit of recent PPP statistics.

Although acknowledging the complexities of the exercise, the ABS needs to be confident that the OECD has an effective quality improvement work program in place before committing further resources to the PPP exercise.

CONCLUSION

The ABS has recognised a number of very important recent external developments that impact on users' requirements in relation to prices statistics. We are confident that, through the initiatives described above, a significantly improved service will be provided to users in this very important field of statistics.

4 STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES

The statistical operations sub-program contributes to the following objectives of the ABS Corporate Plan:

- Informed and satisfied clients through an objective, relevant and responsive statistical service.
- Reliable, timely and coherent statistics.
- Good relations with providers, respecting their rights.
- Continuing productivity improvements.
- A high regard held for the ABS by decision makers and the community.

DESCRIPTION

The statistical operations sub-program operates in response to the statistical needs of governments and the wider community, taking into account the public and private costs associated with collecting, processing and disseminating statistical information. During 1997–98 the sub-program operated using a total of 2,786 staff years, representing 87% of total ABS operative staffing. The cost of the sub-program was \$211.5 million.

At the broad level, the activities undertaken within the sub-program include:

- Collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics.
- Coordination of the statistical activities of other agencies (through the Statistical Clearing House, participation in national and State statistical committees, through ABS outposted officers and statistical consultancy services).
- Provision of professional statistical support.
- Development, maintenance and promotion of statistical standards, classifications and frameworks.

The work program of the statistical operations sub-program is determined after extensive consultation with governments, businesses and community groups and with the advice of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council. In determining the work program, account is taken of the needs of users, the benefits of statistics, the load on providers, the availability of skilled resources to undertake the work, and the costs associated with the activities.

The statistical operations sub-program depends on the corporate services sub-program for a wide range of support functions, including human and financial resource management.

Individual components within the sub-program have close links with a wide range of specific government programs which provide a source of data, with users of statistical information and with clients of the statistical coordination and consultancy services. The statistical activities of other agencies complement the statistical operations sub-program resulting in a comprehensive national statistical service.

Costs and average staffing levels of the sub-program are shown in the following table.

COST OF STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM AND AVERAGE STAFFING LEVEL

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Total cost (\$'000)	222 440	294 237	211 490
Cost as a percentage of ABS expenditure (%)	87	90	88
Average Operative Staff Years(a)	2 774	3 546	2 786

(a) More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

OUTPUTS

The ABS exploits many avenues for the dissemination of its statistical information but, in line with client preferences, printed publications remain the main first release medium.

The ABS operates two Internet services. The first, the ABS home page known as the 'Statsite' is generally accessible and provides 'public good' information free of charge (at <http://www.abs.gov.au>). The second service provides access to ABS time series for staff and students of subscribing Australian university libraries. The ABS is also increasingly using the Internet to deliver information to clients via electronic mail.

Other modes used for the dissemination of information include computer-readable media (floppy disk, CD-ROM, magnetic tape) and a number of facilities allowing electronic on-line access. This latter form of access includes PC-Ausstats, an on-line service for delivering time series data to customers, and TELESTATS, which is a Telstra Keylink electronic mail system to provide a service that delivers previously requested foreign trade statistics to subscribers. The ABS also provides 'Dial-a-Statistic'—a 1900 telephone recorded message service covering the most frequently sought information.

The ABS operates, in each of its Regional Offices, a free, quick reference, central information service for routine statistical information. The ABS also offers an information consultancy service, on a fee-for-service basis, for clients requiring more complex information.

In most fields, more detailed statistics and other forms of statistics than those initially released in publications are available through the ABS information consultancy service.

Even with the array of measures described above, the ABS cannot in practice meet the needs of all users of statistics directly. Various information intermediaries therefore play an important role in disseminating statistics. These include all branches of the media, libraries (general and specialised), commercial information networks, and business, academic and other research services.

Consistent with the Government's user pays policy, the ABS charges for its products and services regardless of whether they are being provided to governments or the community generally. The aims of this policy are to encourage users to identify and address their real needs for statistics, to enable the demand for ABS products to be used as an indicator of how ABS resources should be used, and to offset the cost of production of the statistics.

The ABS has 'public interest' obligations to ensure that at least basic statistics are both readily available and affordable. To meet these obligations, publications are made available on a complimentary basis to parliamentarians, major news media organisations and parliamentary, public and tertiary institution libraries. In addition, the ABS conducts a Library Extension Program, with 528 libraries participating across Australia. These libraries are provided with free ABS publications and some electronic services to meet the needs of their local communities.

The following tables show information relating to ABS outputs.

PUBLICATION TITLES, 1996-97 AND 1997-98
(number)

	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
1996-97	126	48	50	102	326
1997-98					
National	63	39	16	85	203
New South Wales	8	3	4	6	21
Victoria	7	3	2	7	19
Queensland	8	3	3	5	19
Western Australia	8	3	2	7	20
South Australia	6	2	2	7	17
Tasmania	7	2	2	11	22
Northern Territory	4	2	1	8	15
Australian Capital Territory	5	2	1	5	13
Total	116	59	(a)33	141	349

(a) A number of monthly publications were changed to quarterly publications during the year.

**ABS RELEASES(a) CLASSIFIED BY SUBJECT MATTER AND FREQUENCY, 1996-97 AND 1997-98
(number)**

	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Other	Total
Economic Finance Releases					
(National Accounts, Balance of Payments, International Investment and Trade, Public and Private Finance)					
1996-97	24	57	47	6	134
1997-98	15	48	49	5	117
Industry Releases(b)					
(Agriculture, Mining, Manufacturing, Construction, Distribution, Transport, Service Industries, Science and Technology)					
1996-97	57	93	272	22	444
1997-98	38	86	(c)148	25	297
Population and Migration Releases					
(Population Estimates, Projections, Census, Vital and Migration Statistics)					
1996-97	39	4	13	9	65
1997-98	67	4	12	(d)48	131
Labour Releases					
(Labour Force, Employment Conditions, Prices, Household Income and Expenditure)					
1996-97	16	40	164	32	252
1997-98	15	69	(c)65	17	166
Social Analysis Releases					
(Education, Health, Welfare, Law, Order, Public Safety)					
1996-97	12	4	—	44	60
1997-98	20	4	—	29	53
Other General Releases					
1996-97	45	22	138	112	317
1997-98	29	22	121	131	303
TOTAL					
1996-97	193	220	634	225	1 272
1997-98	184	233	395	255	1 067

(a) Includes catalogue numbered publications and releases on microfiche and floppy disk. (b) A number of releases scheduled for 1997-98 will be released in 1998-99. (c) A number of industry and labour monthly releases were converted to quarterly releases during the year. (d) Includes Census releases.

ACCESS TO DISSEMINATION SERVICES

Service(a)	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Publications (subscribers)	10 956	11 244	11 015
PC-Austats (subscribers)	215	220	270
Internet Home Page (accesses)	562 930	1 759 986	4 274 154
CAUL Internet (subscribers)	38	33	29
International Trade (subscribers)(b)	1 003	1 104	1 289
Telephone Inquiry Service (calls completed)	210 867	209 047	189 020
Internet Inquiry Service	698	2 376	5 124
Dial-a-Statistic — 1900 (calls)	38 387	45 560	42 004
Library Extension Program (libraries)	560	529	528
Secondary providers (number)(c)	28	41	46

(a) Where the number of subscribers is shown this refers to 30 June. (b) Includes clients previously using Telestats service.

(c) Various organisations which are licensed to resell ABS data.

**REVENUE RAISED FROM STATISTICS
(\$'000)**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Publications			
Subscriptions	2 401	2 233	2 031
Other (including bookshops)	1 473	1 496	1 740
Electronic Products	1 938	1 569	7 761
Information Consultancy	3 399	4 513	6 594
Statistical Consultancy	1 415	798	1 023
User Funded Surveys	9 261	8 757	6 424
Other Products and Services(a)	5 247	3 766	5 454
Total	25 134	23 132	31 027

(a) Includes special trade returns, user funding for statistical units, microfiche, outposted officer charges, seminar fees and paper-based products other than publications.

**TIME BETWEEN END OF REFERENCE PERIOD AND RELEASE OF DATA(a)
(average number of elapsed days)**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Main economic indicator statistics			
Monthly	34	35	(b)31
Quarterly	60	60	(b)48
Other statistics			
Monthly	50	51	(c)38
Quarterly	94	89	85
Annual	352	330	387

(a) Excludes releases of data from the Population Census which have an atypical release pattern, and publications that predominantly contain data that have been previously released. (b) The improvement in release time is partially attributable to a number of monthly main economic indicator statistics converted to quarterly releases. (c) The improvement in release time is partially attributable to cessation of a number of monthly releases.

REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of the statistical operations sub-program during 1997–98 (except the support and ‘business office’ components which provide executive, secretarial and other support to their respective Divisions). The entries are in the order shown in Appendix 1 (ABS Program Structure).

Dissemination Services

Dissemination Services provides the ABS with printing and publishing services, including printed publications and electronic products and services. It prepares the ABS’s catalogue of publications and a range of other reference products such as *Year Book Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1301.0).

During 1997–98, the ABS produced 349 publication titles, which equated to 1,067 individual publication releases. Publications range in size from a few pages containing monthly or quarterly key economic and social indicator series, to major ‘thematic’ volumes such as *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0) which bring together data from different sources on particular topics of interest.

The expanding range of electronic products and services includes data available on CD-ROM, data provided by e-mail, and data available online via PC-Ausstats (an ABS database of over 100,000 time series) allowing users to download their own selection of data for further manipulation. The ABS Statsite (<http://www.abs.gov.au>) provides a wide range of information including statistical data, news releases, and conceptual and technical information about ABS statistics. The number of accesses to Statsite pages increased substantially in 1997–98 to 4.3 million accesses, up from 1.8 million in 1996–97 making it one of Australia’s most frequently used websites.

ABS publications are distributed through ABS bookshops located in all ABS Offices, through commercial distributors including Ausinfo Bookshops, and through a subscription service. Printed and electronic catalogues and guides are produced to help clients locate the information they need.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Enhancement of the ABS Statsite homepage on the Internet.
- Implementation of a facility to allow 1996 Census clients to place orders for customised tables in advance of Census data being released.
- Implementation of a new system for managing subscriptions to ABS products and services, which resulted in significant efficiency improvements for ABS and its clients.
- Development of a service charter for ABS clients.

- Release of purpose built software, ABS graph, which embeds ABS publishing standards in its graphical presentation of data.
- Promulgation of improved ABS publishing standards, to assist the production of more easily read and understood publications.
- Enhancement of ABS publishing systems to improve consistency in the application of publishing standards, and the efficiency of product generation in both paper and electronic formats.
- Implementation of a trial of electronic delivery of ABS publications to 100 selected subscribers using Internet e-mail.
- A national system for recording and tracking information consultancies was implemented in client service areas across Australia. This system is providing for the first time a national picture of consultancy activity on a consistent basis.

Marketing and Public Relations

Marketing

The marketing sub-component is responsible for raising awareness of ABS capability to service the information and analytical needs of government, business and the broader community. In order to do this, the marketing area collects and disseminates information about client requirements and ABS capabilities and how these can most equitably and cost-effectively be aligned. It aims to ensure that all ABS marketing initiatives are co-ordinated and integrated to maximise the informed use of statistics throughout the community.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Presentation and promotion of major Census products including KeyData, CData96 and CLIB, which contributed to the dissemination of 1996 Census information in a cost-effective manner.
- Continued release of *What Figures* and *Census Update*, to improve awareness of ABS products and services.
- Joint development and implementation of a series of marketing and promotional plans with ABS subject matter areas.
- Provision of assistance to promote and present a series of seminars on major social indicators to assist broad community understanding of social issues and trends.
- Development of a template and procedures to capture descriptive information about the services which the ABS can provide to assist in better servicing client needs.

- Market research to identify client needs and the quality and suitability of ABS products and services, including research to assist in determining the most appropriate method of disseminating agricultural data and main economic indicators.
- A review of the major promotional publication *What Figures*, and the client database on which it relies, in order to better serve ABS clients.

Media and Public Relations

The aim of the media and public relations sub-component is to ensure that there is good communication between the ABS and the media, politicians, other opinion leaders, providers of information to statistical collections, and the community in general.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of a communication plan for the release of data from the 1996 Census to ensure widespread awareness of the availability and value of the information.
- Continued targeting of outlets of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia to encourage awareness of ABS activities and services to ethnic and Indigenous groups.
- Continued media liaison, including production and dissemination of 162 media releases, media events and briefing of journalists to encourage prominent print, radio and television reporting of the ABS, its collections and publications.
- Access to media releases through the ABS Statsite increased 300 per cent since July 1997 to more than 25,000 accesses per month.
- Preparation of responses to around 3,000 media inquiries for a wide range of statistical data, interviews and comment.
- Continued media training and media awareness courses for ABS officers in Central and State Offices aimed at developing competent ABS spokespersons.
- Production of the in-house information magazine *ABS News*.

Client Services

ABS Client Services provides clients with a range of services including: free supply of limited information that is quickly and routinely available; information consultancy on a fee for service basis for clients with more detailed or complex information needs; distribution of ABS publications and products in printed or electronic form through information consultancy, ABS Bookshops and through a subscription mailing service; and outposting of staff to other government agencies for specialist statistical assignments.

Information consultancies usually involve an interpretation of client needs, identification of relevant data to service those needs, and the extraction, analysis and formatting of appropriate information for the client. Customised information provided to clients typically consists of statistical tables, graphs, maps, commentary, or a combination of these. The service primarily deals in ABS data, but also draws on information from other sources.

The client management function continued to develop its service provision to ABS clients during 1997–98, including Commonwealth and State governments, selected business sectors, education, libraries and the media.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The telephone inquiry service handled 189,020 calls. With this service, the majority of inquiries are answered immediately and information is generally supplied free-of-charge. The Internet inquiry service received 5,124 requests for information.
- The recorded 'Dial-a-Statistic' telephone service, available 24 hours a day on a 1900 number, was used 42,004 times in 1997–98, a decrease of 7.8% on the number of accesses in 1996–97. The recorded message provides information about the consumer price index, balance of payments, national accounts, labour force, average weekly earnings and population estimates.
- Information consultancies were undertaken in all ABS offices for a diversity of clients and on a wide range of statistical topics. Consultancies to the value of \$6.6 million were provided in 1997–98. This was an increase of \$2.1 million on the previous year.
- Secondary distribution arrangements, enabling third parties to distribute ABS data to end users, increased substantially primarily due to the availability of 1996 Census data. At the end of the year 65 third parties were providing secondary distribution services for the ABS.
- Long term outposts to several Commonwealth government agencies continued and one new outposting was arranged during the year. A number of strategic, short-term outposts to State government agencies were also undertaken.
- National Statpak 98 was distributed to secondary schools throughout Australia, a catalogue which promotes the use of ABS data in the education sector.
- Sales of the ABS Census product, CDATA96, were strong with over 800 copies sold.

Library Services

The ABS Library Network (ABSLN) provides access to statistical and research material to meet the information needs of ABS staff and the public. The Library also plays a role in the ABS's information dissemination and information management strategies and manages the ABS' internal WEB site which enables ABS officers to access work-related Internet information in a secure and controlled manner.

The ABSLN also manages the ABS Library Extension Program (LEP) which aims to improve community awareness of and access to the main findings of ABS statistical collections. Through the LEP, the ABS makes its publications and a number of electronic services available on a complimentary basis to public and tertiary libraries across Australia. An LEP library location directory is maintained on the ABS Statsite (<http://www.abs.gov.au>).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The comprehensive review of the Library Extension Program (LEP) undertaken during 1997 revealed that libraries value the LEP and the ABS' commitment to the program. LEP membership stood at 528 libraries at the end of the year, down 1 from last year.
- Two releases of the complimentary Census CD-ROM product, CLIB96, were distributed to public and tertiary libraries. Over 900 librarians were also provided with training, including training on CLIB96, during the year.
- Increased access to the Internet and online information databases has enabled the Library to provide improved information services to ABS staff.

National Accounts

The national accounts component produces statistics which form the core of the Australian system of national accounts. These statistics summarise, in a systematic and comprehensive way, the economic transactions that take place within the Australian economy and between Australia and the rest of the world. The usefulness of the accounts derives largely from the way in which data from a number of sources are brought together and presented in a conceptually consistent way, both for a given period and over time. At present, Australia's national accounts essentially accord with the recommendations contained in the 1968 issue of the United Nations' *A System of National Accounts* (SNA). The September quarter 1998 accounts are expected to be released in accordance with the 1993 issue of the SNA (SNA93).

Senior staff of the component attend meetings of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group to provide advice on the statistics used as input to the forecasting process.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of detailed proposals for implementing SNA93, including the publication of an information paper entitled *Implementation of Revised International Standards in the Australian National Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5251.0).
- Completion of detailed proposals for annually reweighted chain volume measures, which will replace constant price estimates from the September quarter 1998 accounts. An information paper entitled *Introduction of Chain Volume Measures in the Australian National Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5248.0), which contained experimental estimates, was released. Experimental estimates were also provided with the March quarter 1998 accounts.
- Significant progress on key tasks for benchmarking the national income, expenditure and product (NIEP) accounts to annual supply-use tables. The NIEP accounts will be benchmarked to these tables from September quarter 1998.
- Implementation of new systems, based on a time series system from FAME Information Systems, to produce the quarterly national accounts.
- Significant improvement in the estimation of GDP, its components and related series through the introduction of better quality source data and improved methods. In particular, the introduction in the June quarter 1997 accounts of results from a lengthy investigation into problems with the ABS business register significantly improved the quality of the production-based estimate of GDP.
- Commencement of work to improve measures of capital stock and of multi-factor productivity.
- Cessation of the quarterly State accounts release, and its replacement with a standard data service providing State dissections of various national accounts estimates.
- Provision of seminars to external users in all States on the implementation of SNA93, chain volume measures, and the preparation of State accounts.

International Accounts

The international accounts component produces statistics and related information on the balance of payments, international trade in services and the international investment position. It also participates with other government agencies in the work of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group, through its Balance of Payments Sub-committee. Balance of payments and international investment position statistics are published quarterly and annually, while the trade in goods and services are published monthly.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of the revised international standards for balance of payments and international investment position statistics contained in the fifth edition of the International Monetary Fund's *Balance of Payments Manual* and the 1993 *System of National Accounts*. An information paper was published in September 1997 announcing the changes in detail, while statistics compiled in accordance with the revised standards were introduced for the September quarter 1997 release of *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5302.0).
- Continued contribution to the work of the International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Committee, aimed at improving the measurement and international comparability of international and financial accounts statistics. In particular, Australia met its obligations for the IMF's Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey, aimed at improving the measurement and international comparability of portfolio investment stocks and flows statistics.
- Continued contribution to the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Trade and Investment Data Review Project.
- Release of a discussion paper, *Options for Australian Globalisation Statistics*, which sets out the conceptual and practical issues involved if the ABS were to collect statistics on foreign owned businesses in Australia and Australian owned businesses abroad.
- Continued work on projects to assist statistical agencies in the region including: assistance to the Malaysian Department of Statistics to review and make recommendations on improving the compilation and associated data sources for Malaysian balance of payments and international investment position statistics; and contribution to a workshop for Chinese officials on recommendations to improve their foreign investment statistics.

International Trade

The international trade component produces statistics on the value, composition, destination and source of Australia's merchandise exports and imports for use in compiling the balance of payments and national accounts statistics, as well as for use by government, industry and commercial analysts. The statistics are available in a range of output media, including publications, floppy disk, magnetic cartridge, email and paper reports, and can be tailored to the needs of individual clients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of bilateral reconciliations of Australia's merchandise trade flows with Japan, for the 1994 calendar year, and with New Zealand for the 1993 and 1994 calendar years, and publication of the results in the September quarter 1997 and December quarter 1997 issues respectively of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5422.0).

- Publication, in the September quarter 1997 issue of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5422.0), of an article outlining the processes involved in collecting, compiling and disseminating international merchandise trade statistics, 'Tracking Australia's trade'.
- Publication in the March quarter 1998 issue of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5422.0) of an article about the currencies used in import and export transactions 'Export and import currencies'.
- Contribution to the development of the partnership concept which the Australian Customs Service is intending to implement (subject to satisfactory testing) as a result of the recommendations in its Cargo Management Strategy report.
- Significant progress to convert the international trade computer system to handle the transition to the year 2000.
- Provision of assistance to the General Statistics Office of Vietnam in evaluating its methods of collecting and processing foreign trade statistics, advice and suggestions for improvements.

Financial Accounts

The financial accounts component produces, as part of the Australian system of national accounts, statistics on the financial profile of each sector of the economy and on the markets for various categories of financial instruments. Information on inter-sectoral financial transactions is also provided.

The component also produces statistics on the lending activity and balance sheets of financial institutions such as banks, building societies, finance companies, credit unions, unit trusts and superannuation funds.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Integration into financial accounts statistics of international investment position statistics compiled to revised international standards.
- Progressive development of the methods and concepts required for the financial accounts to conform to the 1993 *System of National Accounts* (SNA93).
- Collection of financial information from most financial sectors according to the revised international standards for financial accounts statistics contained in SNA93.

Public Sector Accounts

The public sector accounts component produces information on revenue, outlays, financing transactions and financial assets and liabilities of the Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, and their trading enterprises. In addition to a range of annual publications, quarterly statistics are compiled for inclusion in the national accounts, and detailed financial statistics about individual local government authorities are provided on request. The component provides advice on the statistics used as input to the forecasting work of the Public Sector Sub-committee of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Compilation of Government Finance Statistics (GFS) for the Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) for inclusion in the Final Budget Outcome and Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook reports, and the provision of training in GFS to DOFA staff.
- Revision of the GFS economic type classifications to take account of the projected change to an accrual recording basis and the changes associated with the introduction of the 1993 System of National Accounts.
- Conduct of a workshop involving staff from the ABS and Commonwealth and State/Territory departments of Finance and Treasury to discuss the move of GFS to a 'whole of government' and an accrual accounting basis.
- Publication of statistics for universities as a separate sector to reflect the combined roles of Commonwealth and State governments in their control and financing, and the extension of GFS coverage to include all public universities.

Prices

The prices component is responsible for compiling the consumer price index (CPI) and a range of producer and international trade price indexes.

The CPI measures the change each quarter in the cost of purchasing a fixed basket of consumer goods and services. The producer and international trade price indexes include price indexes of inputs and outputs of manufacturing industry, materials used in the building industry, exports and imports.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of the most comprehensive review of the CPI since its inception in 1960. The key outcome of the review is that the focus of the CPI will change from the measurement of changes in the living costs of wage and salary earner households to the measurement of price inflation for the household sector as a whole. Details were provided in an information paper, *Outcome of the 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review* (ABS Cat. no. 6453.0) released on 12 November 1997.

- Completion of a new computer processing system designed to calculate the consumer and producer price indexes. All the producer and international trade price indexes for September quarter 1997 were processed on the new system.
- Significant progress on a long term program to establish producer price indexes for the output of industries in the service sector of the economy. Experimental series have been established for most of the ANZSIC classes in the Transport and Storage Division and Property Services Subdivision. In the Business Services Subdivision, collections have been established for several industry classes and work is progressing on another ten classes.
- The frequency of collection and compilation of the producer and international trade price indexes was changed from monthly to quarterly, commencing with the September quarter 1997.

For more information on this component refer to Chapter 3 for an article entitled 'Recent Developments in Price and Labour Cost Indexes'.

Business Statistics

Investment and Profits Surveys

The investment and profits surveys sub-component produces indicators of current and future economic activity through the publication of quarterly estimates of company profits, new capital expenditure, stocks, and manufacturers' and wholesalers' sales.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Development work to support the progressive expansion of the existing survey of stocks and manufacturers' and wholesalers' sales to provide an ongoing quarterly measure of performance of the service industries sector.
- Commencement of collection of a State dissection of manufacturers' and wholesalers' sales.
- Continued investigation and testing of the feasibility of integrating the existing quarterly surveys of new capital expenditure, stocks and sales, company profits, and employment and earnings into a single, quarterly economy wide survey. This included a large pilot test of a collection form containing all of the items currently sought separately. A program of phased implementation has now been scheduled for 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01.
- Redevelopment of the processing systems that support the surveys is well underway and expected to be completed by September 1999. The focus is to ensure the systems handle the transition to the year 2000 and are adaptable to changes in methodology envisaged under a quarterly economy wide survey.

Income Tax

This sub-component is responsible for enhancing the way the ABS uses income tax data, provided by the Australian Taxation Office under the *Income Tax Assessment Act*, for statistical purposes. This initiative continues to have a high priority and is a fundamental element of the plan to compile the Australian national accounts on an input-output basis.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Processing a sample of about 80,000 small employing businesses using business income tax data for the 1995–96 financial year.
- Development of a methodology and systems for combining income tax and ABS business income and expenditure data for the service industries for the 1995–96 and 1996–97 financial years.
- Completion of a review with accountants and accounting bodies to better understand the relationship between business accounts, taxation accounts and economic statistical requirements.
- Provision of support to the increasing number of ABS areas investigating the use of business income tax data for geographic and industry statistics.

Economy Wide Statistics

The economy wide statistics component is responsible for a range of annual statistics on the financial operations and performance of businesses in all industries of the Australian economy. The component also conducts a quarterly survey of expectations of short and medium term business performance, which covers all business sizes and all parts of the economy except agriculture and general government.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Conduct of the seventh annual economic activity survey, in respect of 1996–97, which included an expanded sample to produce more reliable detailed statistics. These data and that from earlier surveys were supplemented with disaggregated income tax data during 1997–98 and the combined data set was used in the compilation of the national accounts using the input-output approach. National accounts based on the new approach will be released for the first time in October 1998.
- Inclusion of trend analysis in an updated business expectations publication *Australian Business Expectations* (ABS Cat. no. 5250.0).
- Development of experimental realisation analysis for short term business expectations.

Small Business Statistics

The small business statistics component produces a range of data about the size, structure and performance of small and medium sized businesses to assist policy makers, researchers and the community to understand the behaviour of the sector.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of results from the 1995–96 business longitudinal survey in the publication *Small and Medium Enterprises, Business Growth and Performance Survey, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8141.0).
- Conduct of the third longitudinal survey (relating to 1996–97); results will become available in September 1998.
- Publication of results from the February 1997 household survey on the characteristics of small business operators in *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8127.0).
- Publication of a compendium of statistics about the small business sector in *Small Business in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1321.0).
- Release of an occasional paper entitled *Business Exits, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8144.0).
- Preparation and presentation of papers for the 1997 annual conferences of the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand, the Decision Sciences Institute and the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme.

Science and Technology

The science and technology component provides statistics on research and experimental development (R&D), innovation, and information and telecommunication technologies, including the Internet.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of results from the 1996 R&D survey for the higher education sector (in ABS Cat. no. 8111.0).
- Conduct of the 1996–97 R&D surveys for the business enterprises and general government and private non-profit sectors. Results from these surveys will be published in July 1998 (in ABS Cat. nos. 8104.0 and 8109.0). An all sector summary will also be published in July (in ABS Cat. no. 8112.0).
- Completion of the first revision of the Australian Standard Research Classification, to be published in September 1998 (in ABS Cat. no. 1297.0).
- Publication of results from the 1996–97 innovation in manufacturing survey (in ABS Cat. no. 8116.0).

- Conduct of studies on the extent of innovation in the mining, agriculture, construction and telecommunications industries. Results of the mining study are expected to be released in August 1998 (in ABS Cat. no. 8121.0). Results of the remaining industry studies are expected to be released before the end of the year (in ABS Cat. no. 8118.0).
- Publication of results from 1996 household surveys on the use of information and telecommunications technologies in the home (in ABS Cat. no. 8146.0).
- Publication of results from the February 1998 survey on the use of information and telecommunications technologies in the home (in ABS Cat. no. 8128.0).
- Publication, for the first time, on the use of the Internet by householders in February 1998 (in ABS Cat. no. 8147.0).
- Publication of the final results from the 1995–96 survey of producers of information technology and telecommunications goods and services (in ABS Cat. no. 8126.0).
- Conduct of the 1996–97 survey of the telecommunications industry, the results from which are expected to be released in August 1998 (in ABS Cat. nos 8145.0 and 8148.0).
- Development of the 1997–98 business use of IT and government use of IT surveys.
- Contributions to the development of statistical standards for science and technology indicators by the OECD, particularly in relation to information technology statistics.
- Presentation of a paper on telecommunications statistics at the 1997 Communications Research Forum.

Agriculture

The main elements of the agriculture component are the conduct of an agricultural commodity survey and associated supplementary collections. The next agricultural census is planned for 2001–02. Large surveys will be conducted in the intervening years. The component also conducts a monthly collection of livestock slaughtering, a monthly collection of wool receivals by brokers and dealers, and an annual agricultural finance survey. A range of derived statistics, including estimates of the value of agricultural commodities produced and the apparent consumption of foodstuffs and nutrients is also produced by the agriculture component.

Senior staff participate in the Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee which meets in Melbourne several times each year.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of the 1996–97 Agricultural Census. Funding provided by users enabled the collection of detailed data on apples, pears, stone fruit production and grape varieties.
- Development and implementation of the first agricultural commodity survey for 1997–98. User funding was provided to collect data on the use of information technology nationally by farm households and businesses, and on farm forestry and fencing for Victoria.
- Conduct of a national nursery industry collection and a meat production survey for Western Australia supported by user funding.
- Release of preliminary results from the 1996–97 agricultural finance survey in February 1998, to coincide with the National Agricultural and Resources Outlook Conference.
- Expanded collection, in the 1996–97 agricultural finance survey, of data on expenditure on waste management, land management, environmental protection and changes in farming practices.
- Release of *Agriculture, Australia*, 1995–96 (ABS Cat. no. 7113.0), a compendium publication on the structure of the Australian farming sector.
- Development of a rural community indicator prototype which would enable monthly population survey and special supplementary survey data from rural communities to be identified.
- Establishment of a pilot project in collaboration with the Bureau of Resource Sciences (BRS) to develop and test methodologies for the development of agricultural land use/land management digital datasets and land use maps for Australia.
- Commencement of work to redevelop the agriculture computer processing system.
- Development of a directory of agricultural statistics to be released in August 1998.

Mining

The mining component conducts annual surveys of the mining, electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries. The collections provide data on the structure, operations and output of the industries. Quarterly collections of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration are also undertaken.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of preliminary results from the 1996–97 mining industry collection and the 1996–97 electricity and gas industries collection in January 1998, to coincide with the National Agricultural and Resources Outlook Conference.
- Release of the first compendium publication on the electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries in March 1998 for the reference year 1995–96. Information for the water and sewerage industries was published separately for the first time.
- Release of final results from the 1995–96 mining industry collection in April 1998, covering services to mining for the first time.
- The first meeting of the Mining User Advisory Group was held in September 1997. Representatives from a range of private and public organisations attended the meeting.
- Reviews of the Mining and Utilities and Mineral and Petroleum Exploration National Project Centres (NPCs) were completed during 1997–98. Both reviews identified ways to improve the efficiency of NPCs. Recommendations from the Mining and Utilities NPC review have been or are currently being implemented whilst recommendations from the Mineral and Petroleum Exploration NPC review are expected to be implemented during 1998–99.
- Inclusion of supplementary questions, in the June quarter 1997 mineral exploration collection, on overseas exploration expenditure by Australian resident companies and exploration drilling methods.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing component provides statistics on the structure, performance and production of the manufacturing industry. Data collected and disseminated include commodity production statistics, and extensive statistics on the structure, financial operations, performance and other characteristics of manufacturing industry. The latter set of statistics is obtained from an annual manufacturing industry survey.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Successful conduct of the 1996–97 Manufacturers Census which will enable regional analysis of manufacturing industry performance.
- Improved survey processing, leading to higher quality data input to the annual and quarterly national accounts.
- Improved data collection and data processing arrangements, which have significantly improved the timeliness of release of 1996–97 manufacturing survey statistics.

- Release of a new publication, *Manufacturing, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8225.0) which combines manufacturing data from a number of different sources.

Construction

The construction component produces statistics on the structure, performance and other characteristics of the construction industry, and timely indicators of activity for the three components of construction: residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction. The sources of data include monthly building approvals reported by approving authorities, and quarterly surveys of building activity and engineering construction. The component also conducts a construction industry survey on an irregular basis to provide measures of the structure of the construction industry as a whole.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation, in conjunction with the Building Control Commission of Victoria, of central electronic reporting of building approvals data for Victoria.
- Improvements in data collection arrangements for other building approvals data.
- Continued improvement in the quality of preliminary estimates of building activity provided for inclusion in the quarterly national accounts.
- Improved questionnaire design for the building activity survey.
- Commencement of a methodological review of the engineering construction survey.
- Conduct of the 1996–97 Construction Industry Survey.

Transport

The transport component provides monthly and annual statistics on new motor vehicle registrations and quarterly statistics on freight movements by rail, sea and air. It undertakes surveys of motor vehicle use and associated motor vehicle censuses, which are conducted on a quarterly and annual basis respectively. Other activities include compilation of compendium publications and directories of transport statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of a new methodology for the survey of motor vehicle use.
- Publication of an information paper entitled *Motor Vehicle Use, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9219.0) containing measures of recall bias and adjusted aggregate data for the 1995 Survey of Motor Vehicle Use.

- Commencement of work on the second edition of the *Directory of Transport Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1132.0).
- Conduct of a review of transport statistics, including reviews of the new motor vehicles registrations collection and the road freight statistics component of the freight movements survey.
- Development of a new road freight statistics collection.
- Publication of results from the *1996 Motor Vehicle Census, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9309.0).

Service Industries

The service industries component produces statistics on the size, structure, operations and output of a variety of service industries.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication for the first time of statistics on the community services industry in respect of 1995–96 (in ABS Cat. no. 8696.0).
- Publication of statistics in respect of 1995–96 for legal and accounting services (in ABS Cat. no. 8678.0), computing services (in ABS Cat. no. 8669.0), real estate agents (in ABS Cat. no. 8663.0), consultant engineering services (in ABS Cat. no. 8693.0) and the accommodation industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8695.0).
- Publication of statistics in respect of 1996–97 on the casino industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8683.0) and the motion picture exhibition industry (in ABS Cat. no. 8654.0).
- Completion of surveys in respect of 1996–97 on cultural industries, including radio and television services, the waste management industry and travel agency services.
- Methodological research and user consultation in relation to proposed surveys, to be conducted in respect of 1997–98, of the allied health, gambling, pubs, bars and taverns, clubs, and accommodation industries.

Retail

The retail survey sub-component undertakes the monthly retail trade survey, which provides data on retail turnover by State and industry. As well as being important in its own right as an indicator of economic activity, retail turnover forms a substantial component of private final consumption expenditure measures in the national accounts.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of an automated system for the program of retailer interviews to complement the existing Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) collection method.
- Installation of the CENTURA 32-bit operating system into the retail computing environment to enhance the functionality of existing applications software.
- Incorporation of new business provision (NBP) aggregates into the retail survey, designed to improve the coverage and accuracy of the estimates.
- Design work associated with the re-engineering of existing retail statistical processing systems and the re-configuration of the computer system, to handle amongst other things, the transition to the year 2000.

Tourism

The tourism component produces quarterly statistics on capacity and demand for tourist accommodation in Australia. Other activities include the development and promotion of statistical frameworks and classifications, production of a quarterly analytical publication *Tourism Indicators, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8634.0) and irregular production of a directory of tourism statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of reduction in scope of the survey of tourist accommodation, resulting from funding reductions in the 1997 Budget, and the Government requirement that the ABS substantially reduce the statistical reporting load placed on small business.
- Separate identification of serviced apartments in the survey of tourist accommodation to reflect the changing composition of tourist accommodation.
- Completion of a business plan on the development of the Australian tourism satellite accounts and agreement with the Office of National Tourism (ONT) on funding arrangements for the accounts.
- Completion of the overseas tourism marketing expenditure survey funded by the ONT.
- Publication of an updated *Framework for Australian Tourism Statistics* incorporating new international standards and recommendations of the Bureau of Tourism Research Review of Australian Tourism Statistics.

- A user review was undertaken of *Tourism Indicators, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8634.0) and recommendations for its future content developed.
- Quarterly meetings were conducted with major tourism industry associations.
- Provision of assistance and advice to the South African Central Statistical Service on development of tourism statistics.
- Contribution to the World Tourism Organisation's Committee on Definitions.
- Agreement with stakeholders on standard geographical tourism regions and production of maps.
- *Directory of Tourism Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1130.0) released in hard copy and on the Internet.

Environment

The environment component provides a focus for ABS statistical activities concerned with environment statistics and environmental accounting. For these fields, the component coordinates client inquiries and provides access to ABS data holdings, statistical expertise, and industry and household collections.

The program is greatly assisted in its work program activities by discussions with the user community, particularly the Environment Statistics Advisory Group.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of stock, supply and use information for mineral resources in *Mineral Account, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4608.0).
- Publication of the fourth edition of *Environment Protection Expenditure, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4603.0), which provides estimates of environment protection expenditures for private and public sectors and households for 1994–95 and 1995–96.
- Continuation of data gathering activities for accounts covering forests, fish, energy and water as part of the development of environmental and resource accounts. The methodology for the compilation of these accounts was reviewed by an expert from Statistics Canada.
- Consultation with users about the content of the March 1999 household survey on environmental issues, and development of questionnaires and other procedures. The survey will collect information on energy sources for household activities and energy conservation issues.

- Commencement of preparation for processing the 1998 Environment Survey with information sourced from the March 1998 monthly population survey, and the February, May and August 1998 population survey monitors.
- Preparation of pilot survey forms for collection of environmental protection expenditure information from local government, collection of data from volunteer councils, analysis of data collected and feedback obtained from councils on the survey and workshop presentations on the usefulness of this information to councils.
- Investigation of frameworks and indicators that could be used in the compilation of indicators of sustainable development.

Business Register

The business register component is responsible for the maintenance of the ABS central register of employing businesses. Over 950,000 businesses and their relationships are recorded on the register. Maintenance involves applying about one million changes to the register each year to take account of new businesses, changes to characteristics of businesses, and removal of businesses known to have ceased. The register plays a key role in integrating economic statistics by providing consistent population frameworks for a range of ABS business surveys.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Extended use of data provided by the Australian Taxation Office for updating the business register, reducing the need for the ABS to collect data from these businesses.
- Continuation of the business register quality assurance program.
- Continuation of a project to redevelop business register systems to provide greater efficiencies and to take advantage of modern technologies.

Economic Statistics Standards

Standards

The standards sub-component develops, maintains and promotes the use of standard units, data items and other concepts to support compatibility and comparability of data across statistical collections. The component issues papers and publications on these standards, investigates issues related to their application and provides advice, assistance and training in their use. It also evaluates ABS business survey questionnaires against these standards.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of a review of all core structural and derived data item metadata.
- Specification and testing of metadata management facilities for economic data item, unit, classification and questionnaire entities.
- Evaluation of 320 ABS business survey questionnaires for adherence to approved standards.
- Provision of training in integrated economic statistics and use of metadata management facilities.
- Provision of determination and other interpretative services related to units and data item issues.
- Preparation of a best practice paper on the use of special reporting units in business surveys.
- Documentation of issues relating to the collection of employment data in business surveys.

Classification (economic)

The classification sub-component develops and maintains standard economic classifications and promotes their use to support compatibility and comparability of data across collections and over time. The component produces documents, publications, computer assisted coding systems, concordances and indexes related to economic classifications. Advice, training and consulting services are also provided to internal and external clients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of the *Australian Standard Research Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1297.0).
- Release of *A Guide to Major ABS Classifications* (ABS Cat. no. 1291.0).
- Development of a new Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) computer assisted coder and tutorial manual.
- Development of preliminary alternate views of industry to complement ANZSIC.
- Development and implementation of a strategy to identify emerging industries and ANZSIC sub-classes.
- Significant input into the development and publication of the United Nations Statistical Commission standard commodity classification, the Central Product Classification.

- Provision of determination, consultancy services and training relating to ANZSIC, Australian and New Zealand Standard Commodity Classification (ANZSCC) and institutional classifications.

Business Methods

The large business unit sub-component profiles large businesses and updates their structure on the ABS business register. It undertakes coordinated dispatch and collection of annual survey forms for a subset of these businesses. For the largest businesses, it validates reported data across selected surveys. It is responsible for the development of a business reporting model to improve understanding of statistical reporting issues and to identify appropriate sources of data for responding to various ABS data needs. It also looks at the most efficient way for large businesses to provide this data.

The common frame unit sub-component was established to create, validate and maintain a regular series of consistent populations of businesses from the ABS business register for use in selecting samples for various surveys. It monitors demographic information about businesses on the register, produces estimates of the number of businesses, including new businesses, not represented on the register at the time survey populations are extracted, and assists survey areas to take account of those businesses in their collections.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continued implementation of large business profiles.
- Expansion of 'key provider management' to a greater number of large businesses, with the objective of reducing inconsistencies between statistical outputs.
- Further development of a business reporting model designed to improve the quality of economic statistics produced by business collections, and reduce the load imposed on large businesses by making the gathering of business data more efficient and effective.
- Provision to statistical survey areas of information about the number and characteristics of businesses, not included on the business register at the time survey populations were extracted, to allow them to make adjustments for new businesses not included in their surveys.

SPEED

SPEED (standard processing environment for economic data) is the ABS standard computer processing environment for a range of statistical collections. The environment is based on client/server architectures and provides access to relational databases, graphical interfaces and user-friendly tools. During 1997–98, SPEED was used by almost 30 ABS collections. The remaining economic collections, along with many of the household collections, will move progressively to the SPEED environment over the next few years.

Activity and achievements during the year involved design and development of a number of generalised packages, improved links to the ABS information warehouse, corporate information systems, and data views. Testing and implementation of generalised packages commenced across a range of collections during the year.

Census

The census component develops and conducts the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The results are used to revise population estimates for each of the States and Territories, and to provide detailed statistics on the population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small groups within the population. These statistics are used for electoral purposes, for the distribution of government funds and for a variety of planning, administration and policy activities of government, business and other users.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of 1996 Census processing on 27 August 1997, a month earlier than for the 1991 Census.
- Release of the majority of 1996 Census results on 15 July 1997, less than 12 months after Census night, and more quickly than any previous census.
- Release of the following 1996 Census products on or ahead of schedule: basic community profile, expanded community profile, time series profile, usual residence profile, working population profile, Indigenous community profile and three sets of statistical publications for each State and Territory.
- Release of *Social Atlases* (ABS Cat. no. 2030.0) for all capital cities.
- Release of CDATA96, a CD-ROM product which combines census data with mapping data and sophisticated mapping and analysis software.
- Release of Census Keydata, a CD-ROM product containing encrypted census and boundary data.
- Release of CLIB96, a CD-ROM product provided free of charge to libraries which are part of the ABS Library Extension Program.
- Release of census data on the Internet with simple map-based searching facilities.
- Completion of an initial evaluation of 1996 Census data quality, including the release of the results of the Census post-enumeration survey which showed a net under-enumeration rate of 1.6%, the lowest recorded since the introduction in 1966 of post-enumeration surveys to assess the completeness of population counts.

- Release of an information paper entitled *2001 Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures* (ABS Cat. no. 2007.0) to start the public consultation process for the 2001 Census.
- Completion of specifications for the 2001 Census mapping system.

Demography

The demography component produces estimates of the total population by age, sex, birthplace, marital status and geographical distribution, estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and estimates of households and the household population. Statistics are also regularly produced on births, deaths, marriages, divorces, overseas arrivals and departures, and internal migration. Projections of the population according to specified demographic assumptions are published on a regular basis and produced for individual clients. The component also publishes a newsletter and conducts training in understanding demographic data.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of *Census of Population and Housing: Population Growth and Distribution, Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 2035.0) which includes information on the growth, location and mobility of the population at national, State and regional levels. Final population estimates at the statistical local area level for all of Australia are also provided.
- Release of life expectancy estimates and experimental estimates and projections of the ATSI population based on the 1996 Census (in ABS Cat. nos 3230.0 and 3231.0). In addition, extensive work was undertaken to support Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages in efforts to improve the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in birth and death registrations.
- Introduction of monthly preliminary estimates of short term overseas visitor arrivals.
- Development of birthplace and marital status population estimates by State of usual residence for census years.
- Development of household estimates at the statistical local area level for census years.
- Development of data on cohabitation before registered marriage.
- Extensive liaison with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to ensure high quality statistics on overseas arrivals and departures continue to be available after new international passenger cards were introduced from July 1998.

Labour Statistics

The labour component provides information on the composition and characteristics of the labour force, operations of the labour market, earnings and other conditions of employment, and issues relating to education and training.

Labour force statistics, collected in a monthly survey of households, provide timely estimates of employment and unemployment, together with basic demographic data to enable various characteristics of the employed and unemployed to be analysed. In addition, supplementary surveys are run in conjunction with the labour force survey to collect more detailed data on specific labour market issues.

Topics covered by supplementary surveys in 1997–98 included job search experience of unemployed persons, retrenchment and redundancy, weekly earnings of employees, employment benefits, trade union membership, working arrangements, multiple jobholders, persons not in the labour force, underemployment, retirement and retirement intentions, and labour mobility. Related education topics were also covered, including participation in education and transition from education to work.

The labour component also conducts a range of employer surveys which provide quarterly data on employed wage and salary earners, average weekly earnings, and job vacancies and overtime. Indexes of wage and salary costs for employee jobs are compiled quarterly. The component also produces biennial data on the distribution and composition of employee earnings and hours, and periodic data on employers' labour costs. At irregular intervals it produces data on employers' expenditure on training and employers' training practices. This component also produces monthly statistics on industrial disputes.

Statistics on schools, students and staff are compiled from collections conducted in cooperation with the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. For government schools, the data are collected by State and Territory Departments of Education; for non-government schools, the data are collected by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA).

A senior ABS officer is outposted on a full-time basis to DEETYA in recognition of the Department's considerable needs for labour market statistics and the importance of facilitating its access to, and understanding of, these statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Development and implementation of a new wage cost index. Results are published in *Wage Cost Index, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6345.0). The index measures changes in wage and salary costs for employee jobs, unaffected by changes in the quality and quantity of work performed. For more information on this development refer to chapter 3 for an article entitled 'Recent Developments in Price and Labour Cost Indexes'.

- Publication of main results from both the first and second phases of the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns. This survey follows a panel of respondents over a three year period to provide information about the dynamics of the labour market.
- Publication of final results from the 1996 Survey of Aspects of literacy in *Aspects of Literacy: Assessed Skill Levels, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4228.0).
- Publication of *Employer Training Expenditure, Australia 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 6353.0) and *Employer Training Practices, Australia 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 6356.0).
- Publication and Internet release of *A Directory of Education and Training Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1136.0).
- Commenced the development of a survey of employment arrangements and superannuation, to be conducted early in 2000.
- Publication of a number of short articles on specific aspects of the Australian labour market in *Labour Force, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6203.0). Topics covered include owner managers of incorporated enterprises, migrants in the Australian labour force, the youth labour market, and lone parents.
- Completion of processing for the 1997 Survey of Education and Training, the third such household survey conducted by the ABS. The survey collected detailed information on participation in, and outcomes from, education and training in Australia.
- Introduction of a new sample for the labour force survey based on information from the 1996 Census.
- Development of a new survey on non-standard employment to be conducted in August 1998.
- Investigation and development of appropriate statistical methodologies to meet users' needs for statistical information on the spread and impact of enterprise and workplace agreements.

Social Statistics

This component is responsible for social analysis and for providing information on health, welfare, housing, and household income and expenditure. The component produces reports describing social conditions in Australia, and the social well-being of the population and special population groups (such as women, children, youth, aged persons and families). The component also produces statistics on the income, expenditure and other characteristics of households, and on the economic and social aspects of housing. It is responsible for promoting standard statistical concepts, definitions and classifications in the areas of household income, expenditure, economic well-being and housing. It also produces statistics on health (including causes of death, health status and risk factors, use of health services by the

population, and statistics about private health establishments) and welfare (including statistics about disability, ageing and carers, voluntary work, child care, time use, and population groups such as people with a disability, aged persons, families and children).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of the fifth edition of *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0).
- Publication of *Youth, Australia: A Social Report, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4111.0), the first in a series of social reports on special groups in the population.
- Publication of results from the 1995 National Nutrition Survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4802.0). The survey was conducted jointly with the Department of Health and Family Services and included questions on food and beverage consumption, nutrient intake, eating habits and dietary attitudes.
- Publication of *Causes of Infant and Child Deaths, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4398.0), *National Health Survey: Private Health Insurance, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4334.0) and *National Health Survey: Diabetes, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4371.0).
- Publication of results from the 1997 Survey of Mental Health and well-being (in ABS Cat. no. 4326.0). The survey collected information on prevalence of specific mental disorders, the disablement associated with these disorders and the use made of health services.
- Publication of *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4130.0) and *Investors in Rental Dwellings, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8711.0).
- Publication of results from the 1995–96 and 1996–97 Surveys of Income and Housing Costs (in ABS Cat. no. 6523.0).
- Development of the 1998–99 Household Expenditure Survey, which will obtain detailed information about expenditure patterns, income, and other characteristics of households. First results are expected to be released in mid 2000.
- Development of a conceptual framework and methodology for collecting information on the living standards of the population.
- Publication of results from the 1997 Family Characteristics Survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4402.0), which collected information on living arrangements, and custodial, child support and access arrangements for children who do not live with both natural parents.

- Completion of field work for the second national time use survey, which obtained information on daily time use patterns including time spent on unpaid household and voluntary work. Results are planned for release late in 1998.
- Development and completion of field work for the 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, to obtain information on people with disabilities and their needs for care and support.

National Statistical Centres

The National Centres were established to provide leadership and guidance to departments and agencies at Commonwealth and State levels and non-government organisations on the analysis, reporting and dissemination of statistics.

National Statistical Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics

The National Statistical Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics is responsible for national statistics on crime, criminal courts and corrective services. It also coordinates data collection activity and provides an information service in these fields. This includes provision of statistical information, training of data providers, advice on statistical standards, and development of quality control procedures.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of a new publication *Australian Criminal Courts 1995* (ABS Cat. no. 4513.0), presenting detailed information on the flow of criminal matters through Australia's higher courts.
- Enhancement of statistics in *Recorded Crime, Australia 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4510.0) to include information on the outcome of investigations by police and a range of new cross-classifications on crime victims.
- National agreement reached on new data standards for national corrective services statistics.
- A national convention on crime and justice statistics organised in October 1997 to discuss technical and methodological issues.
- Implementation groups established in each State and Territory for the new *Australian Standard Offence Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1234.0) to co-ordinate the mapping of State and Territory criminal codes to ASOC and implementation of agency information systems.
- Commencement of a joint project with the Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence to develop a national framework for statistics on illicit drugs.

Members of the Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey development team, laptops at the ready for computerised questionnaire.

National Statistical Centre for Culture
and Recreation Statistics

The National Statistical Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics is responsible for national statistics on culture and recreation. This includes the provision of advice on applicable standards, procedures for data collection and analysis as well as the education of data users and providers.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Production of detailed reports for the Cultural Ministers' Council and the Sport & Recreation Ministers' Council, on funding of the arts and related areas by governments in Australia, domestic cultural tourism, and sport and recreation employment. Summary data were also prepared and presented in brochure form.
- Release of major compendium publications *Cultural Trends in Australia: A Statistical Overview, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4172.0) and *Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 4156.0), and release of a new publication *Business of Music, Australia, 1995–96* (ABS Cat. no. 4143.0).
- Provision of assistance with the conduct of the first ABS economic survey of libraries, museums and the arts, and a survey on business sponsorship of the arts and sport.
- Commencement of a review of the Ministerial Councils' statistical frameworks for culture and recreation, expected to be completed by July 2000.

National Statistical Centre for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

The National Statistical Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics has responsibility for coordinating national statistical activity in, and for analysing and reporting on the health, welfare and general social conditions of Indigenous Australians. The Centre also undertakes work to improve the quality and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics available from ABS censuses and surveys and from government administrative collections. This involves extensive interaction with a wide range of stakeholders and includes development of performance indicators for government programs addressing Indigenous social disadvantage, provision of training and guidance to Indigenous organisations to improve their capacity to use statistics effectively, and wide dissemination of statistics on Indigenous Australians.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of *Population Distribution, Indigenous Australians* (ABS Cat. no. 4705.0) which provides census counts for Indigenous people in over 1000 geographic areas and locations and analysis of changes in the counts since 1991.

- Development of a new Indigenous geographic classification specifically designed for the preparation of local area statistics about Indigenous people, particularly census statistics.
- Release of three occasional papers which analyse and report on issues of social relevance to Indigenous people: self-assessed health status (in ABS Cat. no. 4707.0), overweight and obesity (in ABS Cat. no. 4702.0), and law and justice (in ABS Cat. no. 4189.0).
- Preparation and release of community profiles (26 standard tables) providing statistics about Indigenous Australians and comparisons with non-Indigenous Australians in over 1,000 geographic areas and locations.
- Commencement of a series of nine publications, one for each State and Territory and one for Australia, providing statistics on Indigenous Australians from the 1996 Census.
- Commencement of a project to promote best practice in the collection of Indigenous data in administrative collections and to measure and report on the quality of statistics from administrative collections.
- Preparation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information Plan *this time let's make it happen*, for the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, and commencement of work on implementing the Plan's recommendations.
- Provision of assistance in the development of national performance indicators and targets for health statistics for Indigenous Australians.

Geography

The geography component is responsible for developing and maintaining geographic products and services for use within the ABS, government agencies and private businesses. Activities include the production of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) and associated products, provision of Geographic Information System, geocoding, and mapping services to the ABS, and continuing development of the ABS's annual regional statistics CD-ROM product, the Integrated Regional Data Base (IRDB).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of *Integrated Regional Data Base (IRDB), Australia, 1998* (ABS Cat. no. 1353.0) and the commencement of the redevelopment of the IRDB to provide a standard ABS platform for disseminating spatial statistics and to improve the flexibility and timeliness of data delivery to clients.
- Update of the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1216.0) to incorporate all changes to local government areas since the 1996 update.

- Biannual updates of the *National Localities Index*, which allows users to code addresses to the ASGC using suburb or locality name.
- Development and testing of a methodology for geocoding ABS agricultural statistics.
- Production of thematic maps for census *Social Atlases* (ABS Cat. no. 2030.0).

Population Statistics Standards

The population statistics standards component promotes the comparability and integration of population statistics by providing classifications, definitions and other data standards for use by the ABS and other agencies.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of the second edition of the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations* (ABS Cat. no. 1220.0), *Australian Standard Offence Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1234.0) and *Standards for Cash Income Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1287.0).
- Establishment of a project to develop a new Australian standard classification of education.
- Development of a new Australian standard for classification of countries.

Statistical Coordination

The statistical coordination component is responsible for the development and operation of the Commonwealth Government Statistical Clearing House. The Clearing House was established in July 1997 in response to a recommendation of the Small Business Deregulation Task Force. All surveys conducted by or on behalf of the Commonwealth Government involving 50 or more businesses are subject to review and approval by the Clearing House prior to data collection. The Clearing House has three main objectives. First, to reduce the load imposed by the Commonwealth Government on businesses, particularly small business, by eliminating duplication, and ensuring that the design and conduct of business surveys follows good practices. Second, to improve the value of survey outputs by improving the quality of survey methods used. Third, to improve the use of survey outputs by improving access to documentation on these outputs.

During the year the Clearing House infrastructure was put in place. This involved the following tasks:

- Ministerial support for the program was obtained.
- The Australian Statistician wrote to departmental portfolio heads providing details of clearance procedures.

- Departments and agencies identified survey liaison officers to work with the Clearing House.
- The criteria to be used in survey review and clearance was determined and an electronic information template constructed as the basis for obtaining the information for the review.
- The Commonwealth Register of Surveys of Businesses containing information about surveys subject to clearance was established and is accessible via the Internet.

In December 1997, review and clearance of all new collections and the larger ongoing collections began. As at 30 June 1998, 32 reviews have been completed, and a further 21 are in progress. Of the completed reviews, 30% have resulted in an improvement to the survey or a reduction in respondent burden.

Analytical Services and Time Series Analyses

Analytical Services

The analytical services sub-component develops and applies analysis techniques to enhance understanding of social and economic statistics. It provides advice to both the ABS and external users on the application of econometric and other methods, and on the availability and suitability of data for analysis. In addition, it publishes *Working Papers in Econometrics and Applied Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1351.0), the *Treasury Model of the Australian Economy* (ABS Cat. nos 1364.0.15.001–002) and an associated modellers' database (in ABS Cat. no. 1364.0.15.003).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Construction of input and output measures for government services.
- Analysis of alternative techniques for measuring the efficiency and productivity of hospitals.
- Review of methods for compiling labour cost indexes and consumer price indexes at low levels of aggregation.
- Analysis of the connection between the quality of economic indicator data and the models used to guide policy formation.
- Investigation of methods for constructing economic accounting matrices using preliminary and partial datasets.
- Analyses of the patterns of revisions to main economic indicators.

Time Series Analysis

The time series analysis sub-component maintains and develops facilities for the analysis of social and economic time series, especially for the estimation of seasonally adjusted time series and trend series. It assists both the ABS and external clients including policy makers, business planners and other analysts with analysis, interpretation, modelling and forecasting of time series data. The area is also responsible for investigating and improving the methodology used in these tasks. Achievements during the year included the further development of methodological aspects of the ABS' time series analysis and adjustment software, known as SEASABS.

Australian Economic Indicators

The Australian economic indicators sub-component publishes *Australian Economic Indicators* (ABS Cat. no. 1350.0), a monthly compendium of key State, national and international economic time series; it also contains a quarterly review of economic indicators and articles concerned with the analysis and interpretation of socio-economic data. During the year 15 such feature articles were published. An experimental composite leading indicator (XCLI) was also compiled and published quarterly. This indicator has provided a lead on the business cycle of the reference series GDP(A) that has averaged two quarters for past cycles.

Mathematical Statistics

Statistical Support

The statistical support sub-component undertakes sample design for ABS surveys to ensure that reliable statistics are provided efficiently and with minimum load on data providers. New surveys are designed and continuing surveys revised as necessary. In addition, statistical analysis and methodological investigations are undertaken to evaluate alternative collection strategies and estimation techniques to improve efficiency and data quality. Statistical analyses are also undertaken to assist understanding of ABS data.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Further developmental work on the incorporation of income tax data in the economic activity survey, to reduce the reporting load imposed on small businesses.
- Development of survey design and estimation methods for new and redesigned household surveys, including the surveys of mental health and wellbeing, family characteristics, nutrition and time use.
- Evaluation of possible changes to the methodology of population surveys arising out of the 1997 Review of Population Surveys, including the effects of changing the rotational design and estimation methods used in the labour force survey.
- Development of a generalised methodology for weighting complex household surveys and for estimating standard errors for complex estimators.

- Investigative work on the design of the proposed quarterly economy wide survey, with a particular focus on developing and evaluating techniques to minimise the reporting load on businesses.
- Survey design work for the wage cost index, to ensure that the methods underlying this new index adequately meet the accuracy requirements of users.
- Further work on model-based estimation and its impact on data collection for input-output purposes.
- Quality investigations of the stocks and sales survey, international investment survey and the engineering construction survey.
- Development of variance estimation modules for a generalised estimation system.

Statistical Consultancy and Training

The statistical consultancy and training sub-component helps ABS and external users to meet their information needs through the provision of sample and survey design, statistical methods, data analysis and statistical training services.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Analytical assistance to the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian National Audit Office.
- Production of *Census of Population and Housing: Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 1996, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 2033.0), and completion of several proxy indices for the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA), the ACT government and Victorian independent schools.
- Provision of assistance to technical reference groups at DEETYA and AusAID.
- Production of methodological reports for various government agencies including the Department of Defence, Department of Finance and Administration, Australian Archives, Department of Industry, Science and Tourism and the Department of Health and Family Services.
- Conduct of statistical training courses for government clients.
- Development of a new internal advanced survey methods course.

Population Surveys

The population surveys component develops, conducts and processes the ABS program of population surveys using trained interviewers to collect information from respondents in selected samples of households. Survey responses are coded, edited and tabulated by the component before being passed to the relevant statistical components for analysis and dissemination of survey results. The component also evaluates the effectiveness of surveys in meeting statistical objectives and outcomes.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Selection of a new sample for the monthly population survey. The new sample was implemented in the non-metropolitan areas during September and October 1997. In the metropolitan areas the sample was progressively phased in from September 1997 to April 1998.
- Conduct of the mental health and wellbeing survey and processing of the data.
- Completion of the third and final wave of interviews for the survey of employment and unemployment patterns and processing of the data.
- Conduct of the time use survey and coding of diary activities.
- Conduct of the disability, ageing and carers survey, and its companion survey of persons in health establishments.
- Development work continued for the household expenditure survey. Field work for this survey will commence in early July 1998.
- Initial development and testing of the Australian housing survey.
- Development and testing of the new labour force survey questionnaire.
- The monthly population survey was conducted on a monthly basis (a list of supplementary topics is shown at Appendix 11).
- The population survey monitor was conducted on a quarterly basis (a list of topics is shown at Appendix I2).

Statistical Services and User Liaison

The statistical services and user liaison (SSUL) component provides a flexible and responsive service to meet priority statistical needs of State and Territory governments additional to those met by ongoing statistical activities of the ABS. The work is undertaken by ABS Regional Offices and generally takes the form of statistical consultation (such as design, development and conduct of a survey), statistical analysis, modelling of existing ABS or client data, statistical training and the presentation of seminars for a broad range of clients in the

public and private sectors and in tertiary institutions. ABS officers are also outposted to State or Territory government agencies to carry out specific short-term statistical assignments.

Through the SSUL component, the ABS participates in bodies established by State or Territory governments to co-ordinate their statistical activities and requirements. The SSUL component also maintains bilateral contact with State and Territory government departments and agencies in order to be aware of their needs for statistics, their statistical activities and their use of information from existing collections, and to encourage the adoption of uniform statistical standards and practices.

An important role of SSUL staff is to be closely involved in the development and conduct of annual State-specific ABS household surveys, the topics of which vary from State to State.

Activities and achievements during the year included the following, which are illustrative of a wider range of activities:

- Provision of an outposted officer to the Dental Statistics and Research Unit of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to advise and assist in quality control and analysis of data utilised in a child fluoride study.
- Modelling of caseload projections for access to child support for the Australian Taxation Office.
- Continued provision of an outposted officer to the Productivity Commission to identify areas in which the ABS can be of assistance to the Commission, with particular emphasis on the review of government service provision.
- Conduct of basic statistical analysis training courses on a user paid basis for State government agencies.
- Investigation, collection and analysis of data from New South Wales and Victorian courts for the Justice Research Centre.
- Design of a socio-economic index measuring relative disadvantage for dependent children for the New South Wales Department of Community Services.
- Conduct and processing of a survey on crime and safety for the New South Wales Police Service and the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.
- Conduct of a survey on part-time, casual and temporary employment for the New South Wales Department of Industrial Relations.
- Conduct of a series of statistical training courses for New South Wales government agencies and other interested external participants.

- Conduct of a survey of the working conditions of Victorians for the Victorian Departments of Premier and Cabinet and State Development.
- Development and implementation of a project, on behalf of the State Inter-Governmental Settlement Committee and in conjunction with the Multi-Cultural Affairs Unit within the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, to develop and evaluate a suite of core cultural indicator questions in various administrative settings. The evaluation will be in terms of data completeness and accuracy and the usefulness of the information for agency access and equity reporting purposes.
- Conduct of a survey of travel to and from work and place of study for the Queensland Department of Transport.
- Assistance to the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority in the development and conduct of a survey of recreational fishing by Queensland residents.
- Conduct of a survey on eligibility, uptake and usage of seniors cards for the Western Australian office of seniors' interests.
- Provision of outposted officers to review the Western Australian Police Service's statistical information and performance indicator needs, and to the Western Australian Department of Commerce and Trade to assist in the development of a regional price index.
- Compilation of a price index for Western Australian produced hardwoods for the Western Australian Department for Conservation and Land Management and the Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia.
- Publication of 1996–97 lower court statistics for the Western Australian Ministry of Justice.
- Design of a data collection methodology to contribute to a quality accreditation system of businesses registering to qualify as preferred suppliers to the South Australian Government.
- Conduct of a survey on travel to work and school for the South Australian Government.
- Conduct of a survey on transport patterns and preferences for the Tasmanian Departments of Transport, Environment and Land Management and the Metro.
- Provision of outposted officers to the Tasmanian Department of Transport to investigate its strategic information requirements with particular reference to road freight movements, and to the Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance to compile and analyse data relevant to its submission to the Tasmanian Local Government Review.

- Conduct of a survey of work related injuries and illnesses in the Northern Territory for the Northern Territory Work Health Authority.
- Completion of a pilot study into the availability and quality of ABS data on Indigenous economic activity for the Northern Territory Office for Aboriginal Development.
- Provision of an outposted officer to the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy to undertake a joint review of the Department's administrative data collections, including assessing data quality, recommending improvements in data collection methods and use of classifications and standards, and identifying opportunities to improve the Department's data dissemination capacity.
- Conduct of a survey of shopping preferences, and ongoing provision of monthly retail survey data by type of shopping centre for the purposes of planning retail centres, for the ACT government.
- Provision of survey design advice and a list of businesses to enable the ACT government to conduct an agricultural and food production survey in the Australian Capital Region.

Information Technology Bureau

The Information Technology (IT) Bureau component is responsible for the installation, management and operation of the ABS computing environment, including mainframe and mid-range equipment, communication networks for voice and data, small-scale technology (including personal computers), software products and databases.

The IT Bureau funds its operations from charges it levies on services provided to internal clients.

Most ABS statistical processing is carried out on the Bureau's Fujitsu GS8400/30 mainframe using ADABAS and SAS and 16 Sun Microsystems UNIX servers using ORACLE's database management system. The ABS also uses Banyan Vines for file and print services and Windows NT as applications servers and Lotus NOTES Servers. These platforms also support finance, personnel, library, management information and workgroup systems.

Access to all facilities is through the ABS network, consisting of about 3,000 personal computers (PCs) using the Banyan network. The PCs run Microsoft Windows 95. There is an increasing trend towards distributed processing for both statistical and administrative processing.

All ABS staff have access to Lotus NOTES, which provides work flow applications, document management and work group databases, as well as electronic mail and word processing capabilities.

Three UNIX machines and a small number of other servers are used to provide services to clients outside the ABS, including the ABS website. These machines are not connected to the ABS Network.

Achievements and activities during the year included:

- An organisation-wide upgrade to a 32 bit desktop operating system and applications suite.
- Provision of a "Year 2000" test laboratory which provides facilities for testing applications in all ABS IT environments to ensure ABS systems handle the transition to the year 2000.
- Closure of the Census Data Processing Centre in Sydney and commencement of evaluating technical options for the 2001 Census.
- Implementation of fault tolerant data storage systems (RAID-5) on all UNIX systems.
- Consolidation of Banyan servers, resulting in a 50% reduction in "down time".
- Replacement of the wide area network with frame relay technology.
- Implementation of a national help desk.
- Provision of a forms handling service which arranges or provides forms printing, labelling, mailing, receipt, OCR scanning, and storage.

Technology Application

The technology application component is responsible for the development, implementation and support of application systems as required throughout the ABS, third-party software product support, consultancy and IT planning.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Further implementation of a detailed plan to ensure ABS systems handle the transition to the year 2000.
- Completion of a rigorous benchmarking exercise of ABS Technology Applications Branch activity by the Gartner measurement service.
- Significant progress in further utilising the FAME time series software for key economic collections. National accounts, balance of payments and financial accounts collections now use FAME to assist in the production of economic publications throughout the year.
- Development of a graphing facility to produce standard ABS graph formats.
- Redevelopment of systems supporting international investment and financial accounts.

- Development of a generalised estimation facility within the SPEED system.
- Joint development work to closer integrate warehouse facilities with other systems infrastructure such as SPEED.
- Completion of the first stage of the business register system using object oriented technology.
- A substantial contract for external redevelopment of the integrated regional database product was signed.
- Redevelopment of the monthly labour force output systems.
- Development and implementation of a number of computer assisted interviewing systems.

Data Management

The data management component aims to improve management of statistical collections and client service through the development, loading and use of a corporate information warehouse. The warehouse (known as the ABSDB) provides facilities to store corporate history and knowledge relating to ABS collections, provides corporate systems and repositories to manage and utilise various forms of metadata, and is an important component of the strategy for introducing a suite of standard facilities to meet the business needs of the ABS, to replace a range of diverse, purpose-built systems. Implementation of these facilities and policies will lead to improvements in the consistency and quality of ABS collection activities.

The warehouse provides a better catalogued, more visible, and more accessible output data source. It will improve client servicing by the provision of a single, authoritative corporate repository for publishable data from which most, if not all, ABS data products will ultimately be generated. Concepts and procedures can also be integrated with data sourced from the ABSDB to enhance the information content and mutual compatibility of separate data products.

The ABS warehouse development parallels data warehousing initiatives by other organisations. However, the range and complexity of ABS data and metadata, unique requirements such as the need to support information dissemination in a variety of formats and media, and the need to provide very sophisticated metadata and information concepts management facilities, means that the ABS has become a world leader in statistical data warehousing.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Decommissioning of the INFOS time series information system in favour of warehouse facilities.

- Substantial progress with data and metadata loading such that the warehouse supports dissemination of the vast bulk of ABS regular, sub-annual collections and is progressively supporting dissemination of other statistical and many non-statistical (e.g. catalogues, directories and classifications) outputs.
- Development and implementation of advanced metadata systems to ensure that more rigorous and effective statistical procedures are adopted across the ABS.
- Joint development work to closer integrate warehouse facilities with other systems infrastructure such as SPEED.

Technology Research

The technology research component plays a lead role in identifying options for using information technology to improve ABS performance in achieving its statistical goals. The component is also responsible for security.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- In conjunction with dissemination services and technology application components, improving the publishing process and enhancing quality control in publishing and electronic dissemination. Phase 1 has involved development of a generalised publication production workbench to provide a significantly automated method for producing publications from data stored in the ABS information warehouse.
- Contribution to establishing an ABS corporate directory to provide ready access for both staff and IT systems to information on ABS structures, persons, roles, and responsibilities.
- Maintenance and enhancement of physical and IT security arrangements across ABS offices.
- Establishment of the ABS firewall. The ABS firewall provides a controlled gateway for internet email and limited web access by ABS staff while providing a high level of protection to the ABS IT environment.

5 CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE

To assist managers to achieve ABS statistical goals through the provision of effective corporate management, efficient and equitable administration, planning and central support services.

DESCRIPTION

The corporate services sub-program directly supports the ABS program by providing:

- Executive leadership.
- A corporate strategy for the planning and implementation of the ABS work program.
- Personnel services, including salaries payment, employee relations, conditions of service, recruitment, workplace relations, security, staff development and training.
- Financial management and accounting services including budgeting and monitoring resource usage.
- General support services including accommodation, policy secretariat services and coordination of international relations.

The following table shows costs and average staffing of the sub-program.

COST OF CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM AND AVERAGE STAFFING LEVEL

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Total cost (\$'000)	34 208	32 693	28 839
Cost as a percentage of ABS expenditure (%)	13	10	12
Average operative staff years(a)	367	353	340

(a) More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

OUTPUTS

The sub-program provides the organisational infrastructure, management and planning systems, staff and facilities necessary to undertake the day-to-day operations. It also provides longer term strategic planning for the ABS program including personnel policies designed to attract, develop and retain high quality staff. The sub-program is required to anticipate the demand for services and supplies, provide control mechanisms to monitor resources, and advise management on trends and developments in the availability and usage of resources. It also provides advice and assistance to managers in monitoring and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of operation within the ABS.

The corporate services sub-program works in close contact with the central agencies (Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business, Department of Finance and Administration and Australian National Audit Office) in providing the necessary service support to the ABS program.

REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of the corporate services sub-program during 1997–98.

Executive

For program management purposes, this component includes the Australian Statistician and the senior managers in each of the Regional Offices. SES officers in Central Office also provide executive leadership, but they are allocated to the support components which most closely reflect their responsibilities. However, issues affecting the SES as a whole are reported under the Executive component in the Annual Report.

The top structure and senior staff of the ABS are shown in Appendix 2, and the details of the composition of the SES are included in various tables in Appendix 3.

During the 1997–98 financial year, four ABS officers were promoted into the SES (three into Assistant Statistician positions in Central Office and one to a Regional Director position). These officers are Jenine Borowik, Garth Bode, Robin Slater and Colin Nagle respectively. Two Central Office officers, Barbara Dunlop and Jonathan Palmer, were promoted from Assistant Statistician to First Assistant Statistician.

One SES officer, John Cornish, is on leave without pay on assignment to Statistics New Zealand, the New Zealand central statistical agency.

One Regional Director, Stuart Jackson, resigned, and another Regional Director, Peter Kelly, retired. Three Central Office SES officers retired – George Sarossy, John Dent and Paul Pentony.

Human Resources

The human resource management component is responsible for the operational aspects of personnel management (including the National Pay Centre), personnel security, and the development and implementation of personnel policies and practices (including those relating to Occupational Health and Safety, Industrial Democracy and Workplace Diversity). Workplace relations and grievance and inefficiency issues also fall within its area of responsibility as does job design and associated job classification standards. Broadly the role of the human resource management component is to assist and support ABS managers and staff by providing a working environment (as distinct from a physical environment) which fosters the development

and well-being of staff and maximises opportunities for individuals and workgroups to make their best contribution to meeting corporate objectives.

Industrial Relations

The main feature of industrial relations matters in the ABS during 1997–98 involved consultation about new industrial agreements under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WRA).

Australian Workplace Agreements were offered to all SES, SOGA, SOGB (and equivalent) and some SOGC (and equivalent) staff in the ABS. By the end of June 1998, some 178 AWAs had been signed and approved by the Employment Advocate.

Consultation was undertaken during the year with staff and employee organisations about a Certified Agreement to cover ABS *Public Service Act 1922* employees. At the end of June 1998, the agreement was within the formal offer period required under the WRA and a ballot of all staff potentially affected by the agreement was due to be undertaken during July 1998.

Consultations were separately undertaken with Population Survey Operations interviewers and the Community and Public Sector Union about a Certified Agreement for household survey interviewers. A draft agreement was developed which provides for improved productivity and efficiency in the collection of household survey data and enhanced employment provisions for the interviewers. A ballot of interviewers was due to be conducted early in 1998–99.

Recruitment

The annual recruitment campaign for base level graduates (Graduate Administrative Assistants, Research Officers Grade 1, Statistical Cadets, and Information Technology Officers Grade 1) was conducted. In total 73 applicants were appointed during 1997–98: 39 for work in economic, population and social and labour statistics and information dissemination, 14 for work in mathematical statistical areas, and 17 in information technology. Three statistical cadets who were recruited to complete an honours year in economics or statistics, complete the total. Of the 73 graduates recruited, 31 were appointed to positions in Regional Offices.

In addition to the annual intake of graduates, the ABS also recruited 81 staff from other public sector agencies or from outside the APS during the year against a background of 406 separations (13% of average staff levels).

Workplace Diversity & Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Consistent with government policy and the government reform agenda, substantial effort has been directed during 1997–98 towards the development of a Workplace Diversity Program for the ABS. It is intended that this program will encompass EEO objectives as part of a

broader program aimed at utilising more fully the different perspectives and talents of the ABS workforce. The ABS's Workplace Diversity Program will be completed in August 1998.

During the year, the ABS Regional Office in NSW undertook a study of gender diversity. After conducting interviews and focus groups with former staff and about one-quarter of current female staff, the consultant engaged to conduct the study submitted recommendations which will now be considered by the new office consultative forum.

While the Workplace Diversity Program has been under development, the ABS has continued to apply and administer its EEO policy. The ABS practises equality of opportunity in all employment matters and is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity. Overall responsibility for EEO has rested with the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division, supported by Regional Directors. Managers and supervisors in all offices have responsibility for achieving EEO objectives.

To assist with the achievement of its EEO objectives, the ABS has had a national network of EEO Coordinators and Harassment Contact Officers whose roles have included handling inquiries and any informal EEO related complaints. Informal complaints relating to discrimination, sexual harassment and other workplace harassment are generally resolved through conciliation in the workplace. Staff may also lodge a formal grievance.

EEO training is included in all induction, supervisor and management development programs and is also addressed in recruitment and selection exercises.

Major activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continued training and support for, and advertising of, the network of Harassment Contact Officers.
- Promoting career development issues for women through women's forums.
- Trialing revised approaches to assisting language development of people from a non-English speaking background.

Information on numbers and percentages of staff in the EEO groups is given in Appendix 3.

Industrial Democracy

The ABS continued to foster good participative management practices in line with its Corporate Plan. More details are given in Appendix 4.

Occupational Health and Safety

A report on activities to promote health and safety is given in Appendix 5.

Organisation and People Development

The organisation and people development component is responsible for information technology (IT) training, leadership and management development, development and coordination of statistical training, competency-based training for Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs) and Information Technology Officers (ITOs), Studybank and workplace consultancies.

Key activities during the year included:

- Delivery of training on the ABS Performance Management Scheme.
- Delivery of training on Giving and Receiving Feedback.
- Introduction of the Statistical Learning Stream Strategy focusing statistical learning on the needs of divisional clients and the development of new, and/or redevelopment of current, statistical training programs.
- Continuation of the ABS Leadership Program, developed in partnership with the Australian Graduate School of Management, as a flagship program for potential leaders of the ABS.
- Delivery of middle management programs designed to address current and future needs of the ABS.
- Continuation of the ABS Graduate Certificate in Management, a senior management program developed in partnership with, and primarily conducted by, the University of Canberra.
- Delivery of the competency-based training program for the 1998 intake of GAAs and ITOs.

The following table shows the proportion of staff years involved in training and development activity, in terms of both participation in and provision of formal training activities.

PROPORTION OF TOTAL STAFF YEARS SPENT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES(a)
(%)

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Trainees	3.3	4.4	3.8
Trainers	1.3	1.3	1.5
Total	4.6	5.7	5.3

(a) Excludes on-the job training.

Financial Resources

Financial Management

The financial management component provides service and advice in the processing of all ABS accounts, receipts and debts and maintains relevant manuals and instructions. It prepares the ABS financial statements and monitors and reports on financial resources. In conjunction with Corporate Planning, it negotiates with the Department of Finance and Administration in the Budget process and prepares agency contributions to budget papers. It also provides technical, conceptual and strategic advice on accounting and financial management principles within the ABS. It develops and maintains corporate accounting policies on emerging issues and is responsible for developing and updating the principles, methods, systems and procedures for generating relevant costing information.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Redeveloped the ABS chart of accounts for implementation from 1 July 1998.
- Undertook an initial specification of outputs for use in accrual budgeting.
- Re-cast the ABS cash based budget to an output based accrual budget in preparation for the trial being conducted by the Department of Finance and Administration.
- Commenced review and re-engineering of the ABS cost attribution model to permit costing of outputs.
- Undertook a review of financial business processes and re-engineered and re-implemented the Oracle Financials information management system.
- Prepared Chief Executive Instructions and reviewed delegations as part of the implementation of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.
- Reviewed and redeveloped monthly financial reports on budgets and expenditure for cost centres.

Corporate Services Systems

This component provides and administers corporate systems associated with financial and human resource management.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Upgraded the ABS financial management information system, Oracle Financials, including implementing a new subscription management system.

- Upgraded the ABS human resources management information system, Rainbow.
- Implemented the new payroll interface with the Department of Finance and Administration's 'NewPay' system.
- Implemented an electronic corporate directory.

Office Services

The office services component has responsibility for building and office maintenance, vehicle fleet management, domestic travel, mail, freight, courier service and records management.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of improved emergency procedures within Cameron Offices.
- Implementation of an electronic movement requisition system for domestic travel.
- Achieved savings associated with effective contract management.

National Accommodation Strategy

This component has responsibility for the following functions: national property management policies, principles, standards and procedures; strategic planning for office accommodation requirements nationally; monitoring property management expenditure; and negotiation of leases for properties occupied by the ABS.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Documentation for a new Central Office building was prepared following the Department of Finance and Administration's call in December 1997 for expressions of interest for a redevelopment and sale of government offices in Belconnen, including the offices occupied by the Central Office of the ABS.
- Development of national accommodation standards.
- Development of a standard lease for use as a benchmark in future negotiations for premises leased by ABS.
- Sub-letting of the Population Census Data Processing Centre at 45 Jones Street, Ultimo, NSW.
- Continued investigation and implementation of environmental management practices.

Secretariat

The secretariat component provides a range of services including ministerial and parliamentary liaison, support for high level internal and external meetings and conferences, and legislation services.

The legislation services include: development of proposals for new and revised statistics legislation, provision of advice to ABS management and staff on statistics legislation (in particular, legislative provisions for the release of statistics), and administration within the ABS of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (see Appendix 6 for further information), the *Privacy Act 1988* and other administrative law. Secretariat coordinates legal action in which the ABS becomes involved, including the small number of cases where legal action is considered necessary to obtain completed forms from persons and businesses included in ABS statistical collections.

The ABS makes every effort to obtain the willing cooperation of data providers and the Statistician rarely issues notices of direction (under the provisions of subsections 10(4) and 11(2) of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*) to persons to complete a form or answer a question. (Under section 14 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the Statistician can initiate prosecution action against a person who fails to comply with a notice of direction.)

The number of notices of direction issued and the number of prosecution actions approved in recent years are shown in the following table.

NOTICES OF DIRECTION ISSUED AND PROSECUTION ACTIONS APPROVED(a)

Type of statistical collection	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Notices of direction issued					
Population Census	—	—	—	946	—
Household surveys	6	—	—	1	—
Business censuses and surveys	15	10	9	20	21
Total	21	10	9	967	21
Prosecution actions approved (a)					
Population Census	—	—	—	48	—
Household surveys	—	—	—	—	—
Business censuses and surveys	3	6	—	3	2
Total	3	6	—	51	2

(a) Approved by the Australian Statistician for referral to the relevant office of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Australian Government Solicitor. Any particular prosecution approval may pertain to a number of notices of direction. Each prosecution action approval is counted under the year in which the corresponding notices of direction are issued. Not every prosecution action approved proceeds to court (for example, because of subsequent receipt of the required information, or lack of sufficient information to serve a summons).

The Statistics Determination made by the Minister under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* enables the Statistician to disclose certain classes of information. Lists of names and addresses disclosed under clause 6 of the Statistics Determination are tabled in Parliament and are shown in Appendix 8. Details of disclosures of unidentifiable information under clause 7 of the Statistics Determination are shown in Appendix 9.

International Relations Unit

The ABS is an important member of the international statistical community. Great importance is placed on ensuring that Australia's statistics are internationally comparable through compliance with standards set by such bodies as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. As well, the ABS contributes constructively in a wide variety of international forums.

The international relations component plans, manages and coordinates ABS relations with international organisations and national statistical agencies. This is achieved through formulating policy and advising on policy issues; assisting other ABS areas to keep abreast of, and contribute to, international statistical developments; coordinating the supply of statistical data to international organisations; coordinating ABS assistance to other countries; and coordinating programs for overseas visitors to the ABS.

Activities and achievements by the ABS in international relations during the year included:

- Contributing, at a high level, to international statistical developments and training, through Australian membership of the United Nations Statistical Commission and the Governing Board of the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific; and through participation in the activities of the Committee on Statistics of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the South Pacific Commission Regional Meeting of Heads of Statistics, and international groups specialising in particular areas of statistical developments.
- Organising an executive level meeting, between the ABS and its counterpart in New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand, which contributed significantly to improvement in the management of both agencies and the working arrangements between them.
- Providing technical assistance to overseas statistical agencies, through visits by ABS staff and visits to Australia for study tours and training. Assistance was provided to the Cook Islands, China, Fiji, Guam, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu and Vietnam. Of particular note is the assistance to South Africa, which began in 1995-96 and was provided under AusAID's South African Capacity Building Program: it related to the census, economic statistics and social statistics.
- Securing a grant of \$238,300, under AusAID's Australia-Indonesia Government Sector Linkages Program, for assistance by the ABS to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Indonesia, in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ABS and the BPS on cooperation in statistics. The application for the grant was prepared jointly by the ABS and the BPS, and the grant will give impetus to cooperation under the MOU.

Corporate Planning

The corporate planning component has responsibility for the ABS budgetary planning system, coordinating the revision and implementation of the ABS Corporate Plan, coordinating the development of the ABS Forward Work Program, coordinating internal audits undertaken by external service providers, and coordinating and participating, wherever appropriate, in program evaluations. Apart from ongoing work, the most significant achievement of the component during 1997–98 was the redevelopment of the ABS's Forward Work Program document.

Internal Audit

Audit activities for the ABS are contracted to Ernst & Young for compliance and efficiency audits, and to Stanton Partners for information technology auditing. An Internal Audit Committee manages and determines internal audit priorities. The main internal audit activities undertaken during 1997–98 included:

- Audits of payroll allowances and entitlements, IT purchases, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland Offices and accounts receivable (follow up review of the 1996–97 audit).
- Audits of the ABS's subscriptions management system, IT planning and internal cost recovery, logical and physical security, contingency and business resumption planning, the ABS Database, and Census IT infrastructure.

ANAO Audits

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) issued the following reports in relation to financial statements:

- ANAO Audit Report No 22 1997–98 *Audits of the Financial Statements of Commonwealth Entities for 1996–97, Summary of Results and Outcomes*.
- ANAO Audit Report No 31 1997–98 *Aggregate Financial Statement prepared by the Minister for Finance and Administration, Year Ended 30 June 1997*.

The financial statements were satisfactory and an unqualified audit report was issued to the ABS.

Attendees of the first Statistical Management Workshop presented by the ABS in Noumea in October 1997, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Standing: Vilimaina Rakaseta SPC (from Fiji), Christine Aisoli (Papua New Guinea), ëUnaloto Ve'a Vakai'Uta (Tonga), Nancy Wells (Vanuatu), Amelia Ngatokorua (Cook Islands), Arthur Jorari (Papua New Guinea), Baakai Teebaki (Kiribati), Todd Evans SPC (from ABS), Tina Tauasosi (Samoa), Kim Robertson SPC (from New Zealand) Jill Lord (ABS), Epeli Waqavonovono (Fiji). Front: Nick Gagabe (Solomon Islands), Taai Katarake (Tuvalu), Graeme Brown SPC (from ABS), Tilson Kapbas (Federated States of Micronesia).

6 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS AGENCY REVENUES AND EXPENSES

for the year ended 30 June 1998

	Notes	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
Expenses			
Employees	2h, 3a	170,619	239,874
Suppliers	3b	50,633	66,681
Depreciation and amortisation	2o, 3c	15,133	16,354
Interest	2g	638	687
Write down of assets	3d	1,346	16
Net losses from sales of assets		—	197
Other costs of providing goods and services		1,960	3,121
Total expenses		240,329	326,930
Revenues from independent sources			
Sales of goods and services	2d	31,027	23,132
Net gains from sales of assets		284	—
Other revenues from independent sources		442	465
Total revenues from independent sources		31,753	23,597
Net cost of services		208,576	303,333
REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT			
Appropriations used for:			
Ordinary annual services	2c, 5a,b	218,871	298,094
Other services	2c, 5a	1,455	1,459
Resources received free of charge	2f, 5c	83	225
Total revenues from Government		220,409	299,778
Operating surplus/deficit		11,833	(3,555)
Accumulated results at 1 July	9	1,325	4,880
Change in accounting policy	2m, 9	2,581	—
Accumulated results at 30 June		15,739	1,325

The above Statement of Revenues and Expenses should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
ADMINISTERED REVENUES AND EXPENSES		
for the year ended 30 June 1998		
REVENUES		
Other receipts	2d 38	60
Total revenues	38	60
Net contribution to government	38	60
TRANSFERS		
Cash to Official Commonwealth Public Account	38	60
Total transfers	38	60
Net change in administered net assets	—	—

The above Statement of Revenues and Expenses should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS AGENCY ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

as at 30 June 1998

	Notes	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
DEBT			
Leases	2g, 7	11,512	12,688
Total debt		11,512	12,688
PROVISIONS AND PAYABLES			
Employees	2h, 8a	53,918	52,515
Suppliers	8b	1,200	1,652
Unearned Revenue	2e, 8c	3,620	4,222
Other	8d	2,007	569
Total provisions and payables		60,745	58,958
EQUITY			
Accumulated results	9	15,739	1,325
Total equity		15,739	1,325
Total liabilities and equity		87,996	72,971
FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Cash	2i	484	157
Receivables	2j, 10a	10,964	1,772
Other	21, 10b	375	64
Total financial assets		11,823	1,993
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	2m,n,o,p }	34,100	39,850
Intangibles	11a,b,c }	31,739	24,296
Inventories	2q, 11e	4,126	522
Other	2r	6,208	6,310
Total non-financial assets		76,173	70,978
Total assets		87,996	72,971
Current liabilities		30,110	29,373
Non-current liabilities		42,147	42,273
Current assets		22,157	8,825
Non-current assets		65,839	64,146

The above Statement of Assets and Liabilities should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
ADMINISTERED ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
as at 30 June 1998		
ASSETS	—	—
LIABILITIES	—	—

The above Statement of Assets and Liabilities should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS AGENCY CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 30 June 1998

	Notes	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Appropriations		212,182	299,553
Sales of goods and services		29,719	25,133
Total Cash received		241,901	324,686
Cash used			
Employees		169,263	235,519
Suppliers		56,397	70,887
Borrowing costs		638	687
Total cash used		226,298	307,093
Net cash from operating activities	12	15,603	17,593
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		254	274
Total cash received		254	274
Cash used			
Purchase of property plant and equipment		(4,549)	(17,297)
Capitalisation of inhouse developed software		(9,805)	—
Total cash used		(14,354)	(17,297)
Net cash from investing activities		(14,100)	(17,023)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash used			
Repayments of borrowings	7a	(1,176)	(1,047)
Total cash used		(1,176)	(1,047)
Net cash from financing activities		(1,176)	(1,047)
Net increase in cash held		327	(477)
add cash at 1 July		157	634
Cash at 30 June		484	157

The above Statement of Cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
ADMINISTERED CASH FLOWS		
for the year ended 30 June 1998		
Cash Received		
Other receipts	2d 38	63
Total cash received	38	63
Cash Used		
Refunds of other receipts	—	(3)
Cash to Official Commonwealth Public Account	(38)	(60)
Total cash used	(38)	(63)
Net cash from administered transactions	—	—

The above Statement of Cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS

as at 30 June 1998

	Notes	Agency 1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
BY TYPE			
CAPITAL COMMITMENTS			
Infrastructure, plant and equipment		800	—
Total capital commitments		800	—
OTHER COMMITMENTS			
Operating leases		73,722	81,821
Total other commitments		73,422	81,821
COMMITMENTS RECEIVABLE			
		—	—
Net commitments		74,222	81,821
BY MATURITY			
All net commitments			
One year or less		15,007	13,747
From one to two years		14,470	13,734
From two to five years		28,394	28,562
Over five years		16,351	25,778
Net commitments		74,222	81,821
Operating lease commitments			
One year or less		14,207	13,747
From one to two years		14,470	13,734
From two to five years		28,394	28,562
Over five years		16,351	25,778
Total operating lease commitments		73,422	81,821

The above Schedule of Commitments should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS **SCHEDULE OF CONTINGENCIES**

as at 30 June 1998

	Notes	Agency 1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
CONTINGENT LOSSES			
Claims for damages/costs ¹		60	—
Total contingent losses		60	—
CONTINGENT GAINS		—	—
Net contingencies		60	—

Details

¹ The amount represents an estimate of the ABS' liability.

The above Schedule of Contingencies should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

NOTE 1 OBJECTIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

The mission of the ABS is to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

For Commonwealth Government program budgeting purposes, the ABS is a single program comprising two sub-programs — Statistical Operations and Corporate Services. The Corporate Services sub-program consists of overheads which have been allocated to the Statistical Operations sub-program in these Financial Statements.

Further information on ABS sub-programs and objectives can be found in this Annual Report at chapters 1, 4 and 5.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements are required by section 49 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and are a general purpose financial report.

The statements have been prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Financial Management and Accountability (FMA) Orders made by the Minister for Finance and Administration.

The financial statements are prepared in compliance with Australian Accounting Standards, Accounting Guidance Releases, Urgent Issues Group consensus views, and having regard to Statements of Accounting Concepts.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets which, as noted, are at valuation. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

(b) Changes in accounting policy

A number of the requirements in Schedule 2 involve changes to accounting policies. These and other changes made are identified in this Note.

(c) Appropriations

Appropriations for agency operations other than running costs are recognised as revenue to the extent that the appropriations are spent or approved for carryover. Schedule 2 requires that amounts received as appropriations for running costs operations are to be recognised according to their nature under the Running Costs Arrangements. Under these arrangements, the ABS receives a base amount of funding by way of appropriation for running costs each year. The base amount may be supplemented in any year by a carryover from the previous year of unspent appropriations up to allowable limits, as well as by borrowings at a discount against future appropriations of the base amount. The repayment of borrowing is affected by an appropriate reduction in the appropriation actually received in the year of repayment. Interest may also be charged on borrowings.

The ABS recognises:

- as revenue, an amount equal to the base funding spent in the year or carried over to the next year;
- as a receivable, an amount equal to the amount of unspent appropriation carried over to the next financial year; and
- as a liability, outstanding amounts of running costs borrowings. The interest cost of the borrowing is expensed over the life of the borrowing.

(d) Revenues from independent sources

Sales of goods and services includes revenue from the sale of publications and other products and the provision of statistical services. Other revenue includes profit from the sale or disposal of assets, contributions from officers towards the provision of communications services and motor vehicles and contributions and fees associated with conferences and seminars. Revenues controlled by the ABS are recognised as departmental revenue. Other revenues are classified as administered. Administered revenues for ABS are very small.

(e) Unearned revenue

Revenue in advance includes revenue for subscriptions for statistical publications and for consultancies and surveys.

(f) Resources received free of charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue where the amounts can be reliably measured. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense.

(g) Leases

A distinction is made between finance leases which effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to ownership of leased non-current assets and operating leases under which the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Where a non-current asset is acquired by means of a finance lease, the asset is capitalised at the present value of minimum lease payments at the inception of the lease and a liability recognised for the same amount. Leased assets are amortised over the period of the lease. Lease payments are allocated between the principal component and the interest expense.

Operating lease payments are charged to the statement of Agency Revenues and Expenses on a basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased asset. The net present value of future net outlays in respect of surplus space under non-cancellable lease agreements is expensed in the period in which the space becomes surplus.

(h) Employee entitlements

Leave

The liability for employee entitlements includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the ABS is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The liability for annual leave reflects the value of total annual leave entitlements of all the employees at 30 June 1998 and is recognised at the nominal amount.

The non-current portion of the liability for long service leave is recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at 30 June 1998. In determining the present value of the liability, the ABS has taken into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Separation and redundancy

Provision is also made for separation and redundancy payments in circumstances where the ABS has formally identified positions as excess to requirements and a reliable estimate of the amount of the payments can be determined.

Superannuation

Staff of the ABS contribute to the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme and the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme. Employer contributions in relation to these schemes have been expensed in these financial statements. No liability is shown for superannuation in the statement of Agency Assets and Liabilities as the employer contributions extinguish fully the accruing liability which is assumed by the Commonwealth.

(i) Cash

Cash includes cash at bank and cash on hand.

(j) Receivables

A provision is made for any doubtful debts based on a review of all outstanding accounts as at year end. Bad debts are written off during the year in which they are identified.

(k) Financial instruments

Accounting policies for financial instruments are stated in Note 15. The ABS is complying with the requirements of AAS33 *Presentation and Disclosure of Financial Instruments*, which applies to the ABS for the first time in 1997/98.

(l) Other financial assets

Other financial assets represents accrued revenue (refer Note 10b).

(m) Depreciable assets

Asset recognition threshold

Non-current assets having a limited useful life (depreciable assets) are stated at cost except as indicated in Note 11. Assets originally costing \$2,000 or more are capitalised in the year of acquisition. Component items purchased separately but which are configured into larger items such as office work stations and personal computer workstations and their software are considered to be depreciable assets if the aggregate cost is \$2,000 or more.

Software developed inhouse is capitalised where the direct development costs (ie before attributing a share of overheads) amount to \$100,000 or more. This threshold applies to costs incurred developing software commencing 1 July 1995. (This compares to the threshold of \$500,000 used in 1994/95. Software developed in earlier years has been valued by the Australian Valuation Office, as at 30 June 1996, and is stated at replacement cost. Details of the valuation are given in Note 11 below.)

The reduction in the recognition threshold for software developed inhouse has resulted in software assets being first recognised in 1997/98, which were previously expensed.

(n) Historical statistical data

Statistical information has accumulated over many years and is stored for reference purposes. The cost of storing and maintaining this data is treated as an operating expense. The data is not treated as an asset because it is not possible at this time to arrive at a cost or other value of such data which can be measured reliably. The revenue generated through the use of such historical data forms an insignificant part of the ABS' total revenue which is substantially derived from the use of current data.

(o) Depreciation

Depreciable assets are written off over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is calculated using the straight line method which is consistent with the consumption of the service potential of the ABS' depreciable assets.

The estimated useful lives of the major assets are as follows:

	Life in Years
Computer hardware	3 to 5
Computer software — proprietary	5
Computer software — developed inhouse	2 to 12
Furniture & fittings	10
Plant	10
Office equipment	5

The aggregate amount of depreciation allocated for each class of asset during the reporting period is disclosed in Note 11.

(p) Capital work in progress

Capital work in progress represents software assets under development which are not depreciated until the year in which the development phase is completed and the asset is operational. Where use of the asset commences after substantial completion of the development phase, but some improvements or enhancements to the system continue to be made, the date of substantial completion is treated as the date of completion and depreciation commences from this date.

(q) Inventories

Inventories comprise significant items held for resale and are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. In 1997/98 provisions have been made for inventory which may become obsolete, and for inventory which may be supplied free of charge as part of a community service obligation.

Consumable stores and supplies are considered to be immaterial and are not recognised as inventories.

(r) Other non-financial assets

Other non-financial assets includes prepayments for telephones, maintenance contracts, office rent, rights to childcare places at Bluebell Childcare Centre, security and subscriptions.

(s) Insurance

In accordance with Commonwealth Government policy, assets are not insured, and losses are expensed as they are incurred.

(t) Taxation

The ABS' activities are exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax.

(u) Rounding

Amounts have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 except in relation to the following items:

- act of grace payments and waivers;
- transactions of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the Reserve Money Fund;
- remuneration of executives; and
- remuneration of auditors.

(v) Comparative figures

With the exception of the Remuneration of executives note (Note 13), comparable figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation in these financial statements.

NOTE 3 GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENSES**(a) Employee expenses**

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Remuneration (for services provided)	138,601	159,675
Superannuation	21,998	26,203
Interviewers' wages and superannuation	8,552	49,111
Separation and redundancy—abnormal item	6,711	3,257
Total remuneration	175,862	238,246
Other employee expenses	2,798	5,171
Total	178,660	243,417
Less: Amounts capitalised in respect of software developed inhouse	8,041	3,543
Total employee expenses	170,619	239,874

(b) Suppliers' expenses

Supplies of goods and services	50,633	66,681
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The 1997/98 expense excludes \$1.8 million (1996/97: \$0.5 million) capitalised in respect of software developed inhouse.

(c) Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	16,045	14,746
Amortisation of leased assets and prepayments	1,693	1,608
Adjustment to prior years' accumulated depreciation	(2,605)	—
Total expense	15,133	16,354

(d) Write down of assets

Financial assets		
Receivables	31	16
Non-financial assets		
Plant & equipment - revaluation decrement	183	—
Inventory	1,132	—
Total write down of assets	1,346	16

NOTE 4 RECEIPTS OF THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

	1997/98 Budget \$	1997/98 Actual \$	1996/97 Actual \$
Sales of goods and services			
Section 31 of the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 - to be credited to Running Costs - Division 671	30,000,000	29,584,719	25,791,676
Administered receipts	60,000	38,219	60,207
Total receipts	<u>30,060,000</u>	<u>29,622,938</u>	<u>25,851,883</u>

NOTE 5 EXPENDITURE FROM ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS

(a) Summary

	1997/98 Budget Estimates	1997/98 Additional Estimates	1997/98 Total Appropriation	1997/98 Actual Expenditure	1996/97 Actual Expenditure
ORDINARY ANNUAL SERVICES OF GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATION ACT	Act No 1 \$	Act No 3 \$	\$	\$	\$
Division 671 - Australian Bureau of Statistics					
1 Running Costs*	246,804,719	1,620,000	248,424,719	240,281,035	323,621,858
2 Other services 01 Compensation and legal expenses	72,000	—	72,000	30,913	263,478
Total - Appropriation Acts No 1 and 3	<u>246,876,719</u>	<u>1,620,000</u>	<u>248,496,719</u>	<u>240,311,948</u>	<u>323,885,336</u>
OTHER ANNUAL SERVICES OF GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATION ACT	Act No 2 \$	Act No 4 \$	\$	\$	\$
Division 979 - Australian Bureau of Statistics					
1 Capital works and services 01 Plant and equipment	1,456,000	—	1,456,000	1,455,426	1,458,696
Total - Appropriation Acts No 2 and 4	<u>1,456,000</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>1,456,000</u>	<u>1,455,426</u>	<u>1,458,696</u>

* The budget figure includes section 31 deemed appropriations.

(b) Reconciliation of agency running costs

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Running Costs appropriation spent (Div 671-1)	240,281	323,622
Less: appropriation under FMA Act section 31	(29,585)	(25,792)
	210,696	297,830
Add: carryover 30 June	8,144	—
Running Costs revenue (included in Statement of Revenues and Expenses)	218,840	297,830
Other agency spending — ordinary annual services appropriations	31	264
Revenue from Government — ordinary annual services (per Statement of Revenues and Expenses)	218,871	298,094

An amount of \$3.6 million was carried over from 1996/97 into 1997/98 and was included in the 1997/98 appropriation. This arose primarily because of revenue received in advance for work which commenced in 1996/97 and was not concluded until 1997/98. Carryovers and borrowings are permitted under the Department of Finance and Administration's Running Costs arrangements. (See note 1(c))

This year the ABS recognises as a receivable, an amount equal to the amount of unspent appropriation carried over to 1998/99. The appropriations revenue figure for 1997/98 includes \$8.1 million as a result of the policy change this year.

(c) Resources received free of charge

The following resources received free of charge have been recognised in the Statement of Agency Revenues and Expenses.

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Australian National Audit Office — audit of financial statements*	75	90
Department of Finance and Administration — provision of accounting, budgeting and salary services	8	135
Total resources received free of charge	83	225

* The cost of the Australian National Audit Office audit of the financial statements was \$75,000 (1996/97: \$90,000). No other services were provided by the Auditor-General.

The following services received free of charge are not recognised in the Statement of Revenues and Expenses as estimates of the costs were not able to be provided by the service provider:

- Department of Finance and Administration — arranging standard purchasing contracts;

- Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business — provision of advice and representation on industrial relations matters.

NOTE 6 RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE OF THE RESERVED MONEY FUNDS

(a) Comcare Trust Fund

Legal Authority — Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997; section 20

Purpose — To process incapacity payments from Comcare for loss of salary due to compensable conditions under section 19 of CERC Act 1988.

	1997/98 Budget \$	1997/98 Expenditure \$	1996/97 Expenditure \$
Receipts and expenditure			
Balance 1 July	59,080	59,080	29,080
Receipts	620,000	583,435	623,895
Expenditure	620,000	(612,515)	(593,895)
Notional balance 30 June	<u>59,080</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>59,080</u>
Investments transaction account			
Invested balance 1 July		—	—
Purchase of investments		30,000	—
Invested balance 30 June		<u>30,000</u>	<u>—</u>
Cash balance 30 June		—	59,080

(b) Other trust funds

Legal Authority — Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997; section 20

Purpose — For the receipt of moneys temporarily held in trust for other persons, and for moneys received without sufficient information for crediting to the correct head of revenue at time of receipt.

	1997/98 Budget \$	1997/98 Expenditure \$	1996/97 Expenditure \$
Receipts and expenditure			
Balance 1 July	7,068	7,068	2,902
Receipts	2,000	5,348	5,580
Expenditure	2,000	(460)	(1,414)
Notional balance 30 June	<u>7,068</u>	<u>11,956</u>	<u>7,068</u>
Investments transaction account			
Invested balance 1 July		—	—
Purchase of investments		10,000	—
Invested balance 30 June		<u>10,000</u>	<u>—</u>
Cash balance 30 June		1,956	7,068

NOTE 7 DEBT

(a) Finance lease movement

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Balance at 1 July	12,688	13,395
Assets acquired	—	340
Repaid during the year	1,176	(1,047)
Total lease liability	11,512	12,688

(b) Finance lease liability

Not later than one year	2,111	1,923
Later than one year but not later than two years	2,154	2,107
Later than two years but not later than five years	6,462	6,462
Later than five years	3,164	5,284
Minimum lease payments	13,891	15,776
Deduct: future finance charges	2,379	3,088
Total lease liability	11,512	12,688
Lease liability is represented by:		
Current	1,522	1,263
Non- current	9,990	11,425
	11,512	12,688

NOTE 8 PROVISIONS AND PAYABLES

(a) Employee liabilities

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Salaries	4,955	1,817
Superannuation	325	280
Recreation leave	15,465	17,245
Recreation leave bonus	—	282
Long service leave	32,986	32,716
Voluntary redundancies	112	115
Performance based pay	75	60
Total employee liabilities	53,918	52,515

(b) Suppliers

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Trade creditors	1,200	1,185
Statistical services for state governments	—	467
Total suppliers	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,652</u>

(c) Unearned revenue

Receipts in advance	3,620	4,222
Total unearned revenue	<u>3,620</u>	<u>4,222</u>

(d) Other

Provision for surplus lease space	1,207	—
Provision for rent	800	569
Total other	<u>2,007</u>	<u>569</u>
Total provision and payables	<u>60,745</u>	<u>58,958</u>

NOTE 9 EQUITY

	Accumulated Results \$'000
Balance 1 July 1997	1,325
Operating result	11,833
Change in accounting policy - recognition of assets previously expensed	2,581
Balance 30 June 1998	<u>15,739</u>

NOTE 10 FINANCIAL ASSETS

(a) Receivables

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Goods and services	2,890	1,842
Less: provision for doubtful debts	70	70
	2,820	1,772
Appropriation	8,144	—
Total receivables	10,964	1,772

Receivables (gross) which are overdue are aged as follows:

Overdue by:

less than 30 days	214	426
30 to 60 days	89	79
more than 60 days	759	164

(b) Accrued revenues

Goods and services	148	64
Rent	227	—
	375	64

NOTE 11 NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS**(a) Assets at cost**

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Plant, equipment, furniture and fittings		
At cost	22,405	22,107
Accumulated depreciation	8,396	6,394
Net book value	14,009	15,713
Computer hardware		
At cost	40,784	46,668
Accumulated depreciation	30,425	33,975
Net book value	10,359	12,693
Intangibles		
At cost	29,972	12,969
Accumulated amortisation	12,335	8,048
Net book value	17,637	4,921

(b) Assets at valuation

Certain inhouse developed software was valued by the Australian Valuation Office as at 30 June 1996, and included in intangibles at replacement cost as follows:

Inhouse developed software		
At replacement cost	27,921	27,921
Accumulated amortisation	21,933	19,805
Net book value	5,988	8,116

A telelift system was revalued by the Australian Valuation Office in 1993, and is included in plant, equipment, furniture and fittings at replacement cost as follows:

Telelift system		
At independent valuation	1,700	1,700
Accumulated depreciation	864	708
Net book value	836	992

(c) Assets under lease

	1997/98 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000
Plant, equipment, furniture and fittings under lease		
At cost	13,848	13,848
Less accumulated amortisation	5,280	3,806
Net book value	8,568	10,042
Computer hardware under lease		
At cost	746	752
Less accumulated amortisation	418	341
Net book value	328	411
Total assets under lease	8,896	10,453

(d) Infrastructure, plant and equipment - movement summary

	Plant, equipment, furniture & fittings \$'000	Computer hardware \$'000	Intangible \$'000	Capital work in progress \$'000	Total \$'000
Cost or valuation					
As at 1 July 1997	37,655	47,420	40,890	11,257	137,222
Additions:					
Adjustment	(19)	(1,683)	(10)	—	(1,712)
Reclassification	—	(47)	8,066	(8,019)	—
Other	536	3,540	8,958	4,876	17,909
Disposals	(219)	(7,700)	(11)	—	(7,929)
As at 30 June 1998	37,953	41,530	57,893	8,114	145,490
Accumulated depreciation / amortisation					
As at 1 July 1997	10,908	34,316	27,853	—	73,077
Depreciation on Additions	28	527	1,746	—	2,301
Eliminated on disposals	(302)	(7,557)	(8)	—	(7,867)
Adjustments	(16)	(4,026)	800	—	(3,242)
Reclassification	0	(47)	31	—	(16)
Charge for the year	3,922	7,630	3,846	—	15,398
As at 30 June 1998	14,540	30,843	34,268	—	79,651
Net book value					
As at 30 June 1998	23,413	10,687	23,625	8,114	65,839
As at 30 June 1997	26,747	13,103	13,039	11,257	64,146
Depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset	10-20%	16-33%	8-50%		

(e) Inventories

	1997/98	1996/97
	\$'000	\$'000
Inventories	5,130	522
Less provision for obsolescence	446	—
Less provision for community service obligations	558	—
Total inventories	4,126	522

In 1996/97 the value reported for inventory excluded inventory which may have become obsolete or be given away as part of the ABS' community service obligation (CSO). In 1997/98 the gross amount of inventory has been reported and provisions made for obsolescence and CSO.

There is a marked increase in inventories in 1997/98 due to products associated with the 1996 Census.

NOTE 12 CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash provided by operating activities.

	1997/98	1996/97
	\$'000	\$'000
Net cost of services	208,576	303,333
Revenue from Government	220,409	299,778
Operating result	11,833	(3,555)
Depreciation/amortisation	15,133	16,354
Capitalised depreciation	(1,168)	—
(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	(284)	197
Write down of assets	1,346	16
Adjustment prior year asset balances	(39)	908
Change in assets and liabilities		
Decrease (increase) in receivables	(1,048)	666
Initial recognition of appropriation receivable	(8,144)	—
Decrease (increase) in inventories	(3,604)	33
Decrease (increase) in prepayments	102	(1,157)
Decrease (increase) in other assets	(311)	347
Increase (decrease) in employee liabilities	1,402	3,590
Increase (decrease) in supplier liabilities	(451)	(276)
Increase (decrease) in other liabilities	836	470
Net cash provided by operating activities	15,603	17,593

NOTE 13 EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION

- (a) The number of executive officer positions for which remuneration of \$100,000 or more was paid or due:

	1997/98 Number of positions*	1996/97 Number of officers*
\$110,001 to \$120,000	14	25
\$120,001 to \$130,000	4	—
\$130,001 to \$140,000	5	6
\$140,001 to \$150,000	3	—
\$150,001 to \$160,000	1	1
\$160,001 to \$170,000	1	1
\$180,001 to \$190,000	1	—
\$220,001 to \$230,000	—	1
\$270,001 to \$280,000	1	—
\$280,001 to \$290,000	1	—
\$290,001 to \$300,000	1	—
\$300,001 to \$310,000	1	—
\$380,001 to \$390,000	1	—

- * Executive remuneration has been reported on a new basis in 1997/98 – reporting on qualifying positions, rather than officers. Total remuneration in 1997/98 includes actual salary earned in the SES position, actual employer superannuation contributions and an estimate of the non-salary component of SES packages (e.g provision of a car). It also includes performance pay and separation and redundancy expenses, including associated leave/long service leave payments. Reported 1996/97 figures have not been adjusted.

(b) The aggregate amount of total remuneration of executive officer positions shown above.	\$5,480,006	\$4,405,024
(c) The aggregate amount of performance pay paid during the year to executive officers shown above.	\$75,828	\$116,174
(d) The aggregate amount of separation and redundancy paid during the year to executive officers shown above (excluding associated leave/long service leave payments).	\$346,615	n/a

NOTE 14 ACT OF GRACE PAYMENTS AND WAIVERS

(a) Act of grace payments

There were no Act of Grace payments made in accordance with section 33 of the FMA Act 1997.

(b) Waivers of rights to payments

There were no waivers of rights to payments to the Commonwealth made during the financial year 1997/98 under section 34(1) of the FMA Act 1997.

NOTE 15 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

a) Terms, conditions and accounting policies

Financial Instrument	Notes	Accounting Policies and Methods	Nature of Underlying Instrument
Financial Assets		Financial assets are recognised when control over future economic benefits is established and the amount of the benefit can be reliably measured.	
Cash	2i	Deposits are recognised at their nominal amounts. Interest is credited to revenue as it accrues.	The ABS holds a small amount of funds with a commercial bank for encashment facilities. Interest is earned on the daily balance at rates based on the 30 day Bank Bill Swap Reference Rate less 30 basis points. Rates have averaged 4% for the year. Interest is paid monthly.
Receivables	10a	The receivables are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any provision for bad and doubtful debts. Collectability of debts is reviewed at balance date. Provisions are made when collection of the debt is judged to be less rather than more likely.	All receivables are with entities internal and external to the Commonwealth. Credit terms are net 30 days (1996/97: 30 days).
Accrued revenue	10b	Revenue accrues and is recognised at the time the goods are provided and/or the services are performed.	As for receivables.
Financial Liabilities		Financial liabilities are recognised when a present obligation to another party is entered into and the amount of the liability can be reliably measured.	
Finance lease liabilities	7	Liabilities are recognised at the present value of the minimum lease payments at the beginning of the lease. The discount rates used are estimates of the interest rates implicit in the leases.	At the reporting date, the ABS had finance leases with terms averaging 10 years and a maximum of 10 years. The interest rate implicit in the leases averaged 6% (1996/97: 6%). The lease liabilities are secured by the lease assets.

Financial Instrument	Notes	Accounting Policies and Methods	Nature of Underlying Instrument
Surplus lease space	8d	A liability for surplus lease space is recognised at the time it is first determined that leased space will be of no future benefit to the ABS. The liability is measured as the total expected outlay relating to the surplus space. The amount of the liability is reduced on a straight line basis over the life of the lease by allocating lease payments between rental expense and reduction of the liability.	The liability of \$1,207,001 arises under the ABS' non cancellable operating leases for office accommodation.
Trade creditors	8b	Creditors and accruals are recognised at their nominal amounts, being the amounts at which the liabilities will be settled. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods and services have been received.	Creditors are entities both external and internal to the Commonwealth legal entity. Settlement is usually made net 30 days.

(b) Net fair value of financial assets and liabilities

The net fair value of financial assets and liabilities, described below in Note 15(d), equals their carrying amount.

c) Credit risk exposures

The ABS' maximum exposure to credit risk at reporting date in relation to each class of recognised financial assets is the carrying amount of those assets as indicated in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

The ABS has no significant exposures to any concentrations of credit risk.

(d) Interest rate risk: agency

Financial instrument	Notes	Floating interest rate	Fixed interest rate				Non interest bearing		Total		Weighted average effective interest rate	
			1 year or less	1 to 2 years	2 to 5 years	> 5 years	1997/98	1996/97	1997/98	1996/97	1997/98	1996/97
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%	%
Financial assets												
Cash at bank	2i	30	—	—	—	—	—	454	157	484	157	4.2
Receivables	10a	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,964	1,772	10,964	1,772	n/a
Total financial assets (recognised)		30	0	0	0	0	0	11,418	1,929	11,448	1,929	
Total assets										87,996	72,971	
Financial liabilities												
Finance lease liabilities	7	—	1,523	1,639	5,425	2,925	4,784	—	—	11,512	12,688	5.3
Trade creditors	8b	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,200	1,625	1,200	1,652	n/a
Surplus lease space	8d	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,207	—	1,207	n/a	n/a
Total financial liabilities (recognised)		—	1,523	1,639	5,425	2,925	4,784	2,407	1,625	13,919	14,340	
Total liabilities										72,257	71,646	

APPENDIXES

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Appendix 1

ABS PROGRAM STRUCTURE, 1997-98

<i>Program</i>	<i>Sub-programs</i>	<i>Components</i>
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Statistical Operations	Dissemination Marketing and Public Relations Client Services Library Services National Accounts International Accounts International Trade Financial Accounts Public Sector Accounts Prices Business Statistics Economy Wide Statistics Small Business Statistics Science and Technology Agriculture Mining Manufacturing Construction Transport Service Industries Tourism Environment Business Register Economic Statistics Standards Business Methods SPEED Census Demography Labour Statistics Social Statistics National Centres for Crime and Justice, Culture and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics

...continued

ABS PROGRAM STRUCTURE, 1997–98 — continued

<i>Program</i>	<i>Sub-programs</i>	<i>Components</i>
	Statistical Operations — continued	Geography Population Statistics Standards Statistical Coordination Analytical Services and Time Series Analyses Mathematical Statistics Population Surveys Statistical Services and User Liaison Information Technology Bureau Technology Application Data Management Data Management Coordination and Support Technology Research Economic Statistics Group Support Population Statistics Group Support Methodology Division Business Office Information Services Division Business Office Technology Services Division Support
	Corporate Services	Executive Human Resources Organisation and People Development Financial Resources Office Services Secretariat International Relations Unit Corporate Planning Corporate Services Division Support

TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT

Appendix 2

ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a)

<i>Top structure and staff responsibilities</i>	<i>Program Component</i>
AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN	
<i>Bill McLennan</i>	Executive
ECONOMIC STATISTICS GROUP	
<i>Dennis Trewin</i>	Economic Statistics Group Support Environment
Economic Accounts Division	
<i>Rob Edwards</i>	Public Sector Accounts Prices
National Accounts Branch	
<i>Peter Harper</i>	National Accounts
International and Financial Accounts Branch	
<i>Ivan King</i>	International Accounts International Trade Financial Accounts
Services and Small Business Statistics Branch	
<i>Russell Rogers</i>	Small Business Statistics Science and Technology Transport Service Industries Tourism SPEED
Production Statistics Branch	
<i>Robin Slater</i>	Business Statistics Economy Wide Statistics Agriculture Mining Manufacturing Construction
Integration Branch	
<i>Alan Mackay</i>	Business Register Economic Statistics Standards Business Methods
POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP	
<i>Tim Skinner</i>	Population Statistics Group Support Population Statistics Standards
Social and Labour Division	
<i>Barbara Dunlop</i>	National Centres for Crime and Justice, Culture and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics
Labour Statistics Branch	
<i>Garth Bode</i>	Labour Statistics
Social Statistics Branch	
<i>Marion McEwin</i>	Social Statistics

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a) — continued

<i>Top structure and staff responsibilities</i>	<i>Program Component</i>
POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP — continued	
Census, Demography and Geography Branch <i>John Struik</i>	Census Demography Geography
OTHER DIVISIONS	
Methodology Division <i>Susan Linacre</i>	Methodology Division Business Office Statistical Coordination Analytical Services and Time Series Analyses
Statistical Services Branch <i>Geoff Lee</i> Population Surveys Branch <i>Siu-Ming Tam</i>	Mathematical Statistics Population Surveys
Information Services Division <i>Jonathan Palmer</i>	Information Services Division Business Office Library Services
Dissemination Services Branch <i>Glenn Cocking</i> Client Services Branch <i>Dick Crockett</i>	Dissemination Client Services Marketing and Public Relations
Technology Services Division <i>Brian Pink</i>	Technology Services Division Support
Technology Support Branch <i>Jenine Borowik</i> Technology Application Branch <i>Dave Bennison</i> Data Management Branch <i>Warren Richter</i>	Information Technology Bureau Technology Application Data Management Data Management Coordination and Support
Technology Research Branch <i>Bryan Fitzpatrick</i>	Technology Research
Corporate Services Division <i>Graham Wauchop</i>	Corporate Services Division Support
Policy Secretariat Branch <i>Robin Green</i>	Secretariat International Relations Unit Corporate Planning
Human Resources Branch <i>Denis Farrell</i>	Human Resources Organisation and People Development
Financial Resources Branch <i>Steve Matheson</i>	Financial Resources Office Services

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a) — continued*Top structure and staff responsibilities**Program Component***REGIONAL OFFICES (b)**

New South Wales

Greg Bray

Victoria

Vacant

Queensland

Brian Doyle

Western Australia

Colin Nagle

South Australia

Peter Gardner

Tasmania

Denis Rogers

Northern Territory

Zia Abbasi

Australian Capital Territory

Dalma Jacobs

(a) Structure as at 30 June 1998. The names of officers managing Groups, Divisions, Branches or Offices include those who were doing so on a long term basis, but exclude those who were doing so on a short term basis on 30 June 1998. (b) Includes the Statistical Services and User Liaison component.

STAFFING OVERVIEW

Appendix 3

3.1 ABS STAFF RESOURCES EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND LOCATION (staff years(a))

Program Component	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98										
	Total	Total	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS(b)													
Dissemination	80	84	39	4	24	4	2	3	3	1	—	—	78
Marketing and Public Relations	49	51	24	7	9	7	2	2	—	—	—	—	51
Client Services	117	124	32	32	17	14	14	10	4	3	4	—	129
Library Services	30	28	16	3	3	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	27
National Accounts	57	57	65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	65
International Accounts	68	79	67	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	67
International Trade	39	34	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33
Financial Accounts	27	27	17	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	26
Public Sector Accounts	62	67	27	8	6	6	4	5	4	2	—	—	61
Prices	101	112	57	21	7	4	4	4	3	2	—	—	102
Business Statistics	40	49	10	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50
Economy Wide Statistics	31	41	36	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36
Small Business Statistics	13	10	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11
Science and Technology	13	12	15	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	16
Agriculture	59	66	12	—	—	1	1	—	52	—	—	—	66
Mining	11	11	1	—	—	—	—	8	—	2	—	—	11
Manufacturing	80	77	3	72	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	77
Construction	63	62	7	—	1	—	—	69	—	—	—	—	77
Transport	55	41	6	—	—	33	1	—	—	—	—	—	40
Service Industries	95	98	41	1	40	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	85
Tourism	23	20	2	—	—	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	18
Environment	12	13	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Business Register	114	91	15	7	56	2	1	1	10	—	—	—	92
Economic Statistics Standards	9	11	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Business Methods	38	50	14	13	8	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	40
SPEED	6	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Census	132	821	58	—	3	—	—	4	2	1	1	78	148
Demography	46	48	22	4	—	12	3	5	1	1	—	—	47
Labour Statistics	176	206	82	—	4	1	93	1	—	—	—	—	181
Social Statistics	87	105	78	2	—	17	3	—	—	—	—	—	100
National Centres for Crime and Justice, Culture and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics	64	48	—	7	16	—	2	12	—	16	—	—	53
Geography	14	13	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	16
Population Statistics Standards(c)	—	—	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	18
Statistical Coordination(d)	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Analytical Services and Time Series Analyses	21	24	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	25

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

3.1 ABS STAFF RESOURCES EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND LOCATION (staff years(a)) — continued

Program Component	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98										
	Total	Total	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS(b) — (continued)													
Mathematical Statistics	64	70	52	5	5	1	4	3	2	—	—	—	71
Population Surveys(c)	283	273	79	30	25	25	22	23	9	6	—	—	219
Statistical Services and User Liaison	60	57	—	9	12	7	9	8	11	2	4	—	62
Information Technology Bureau	194	205	140	9	8	8	8	6	7	2	—	—	187
Technology Application	187	194	143	13	6	12	13	11	15	—	—	—	214
Data Management	27	19	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Data Management Coordination and Support	—	9	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
Technology Research	8	12	6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Economic Statistics Group Support	47	48	15	6	11	2	4	3	3	2	—	—	46
Population Statistics Group Support	52	53	18	5	7	11	6	5	1	2	—	—	54
Methodology Division Business Office	1	3	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Information Services Division Business Office	13	12	10	—	—	1	1	2	—	—	—	—	14
Technology Services Division Support	6	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Total	2 774	3 548	1 374	308	268	192	198	187	129	42	9	78	2 786
CORPORATE SERVICES(b)													
Executive	45	46	1	8	7	5	5	6	6	5	2	—	46
Human Resources	93	95	54	9	4	9	3	2	2	—	—	—	84
Organisation and People Development	65	58	27	6	6	9	6	3	2	1	—	—	60
Financial Resources	47	48	25	4	4	1	—	4	—	1	—	—	38
Office Services	80	72	33	6	13	6	8	5	4	3	—	—	77
Secretariat	11	11	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
International Relations Unit	6	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Corporate Planning	4	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Internal Audit	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Corporate Services Division Support	12	15	12	—	—	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	19
Total	367	354	169	33	33	33	24	22	14	10	2	—	340
Total operative Staff(e)	3 141	3 902	1 543	341	301	225	222	208	143	52	11	78	3 125
Paid Inoperative Staff(f)	84	78	42	8	7	3	8	3	3	—	—	—	74
Total Staff	3 225	3 980	1 585	349	308	228	230	212	146	52	12	78	3 199

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at their full time equivalent. Excludes unpaid inoperative staff. (b) Excluding paid inoperative staff. (c) Figures for 1995-96 and 1996-97 have not been adjusted to reflect changes to the program structure for 1997-98. (d) Started operation on 1 July 1997. (e) Revised for 1996-97. (f) Includes staff on periods of leave for longer than twelve weeks, for example, staff on long service leave, extended sick leave etc. Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a)

Year and classification	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
MALE											
1996											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	926	200	183	132	141	116	97	33	5	29	1 862
1997											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1997	920	201	178	123	125	121	99	21	5	460	2 253
1998											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Senior Executive Service	24	1	1	1	1	1	2	—	—	—	31
Senior Officer											
Grade A	16	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	20
Grade B	43	5	5	4	4	5	4	1	—	—	71
Grade C	132	16	16	8	9	12	4	2	—	—	199
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6(c)	172	28	29	15	16	11	9	3	1	—	284
Class 5(c)	116	31	41	25	21	18	18	2	1	—	273
Class 4(c)	74	40	32	14	27	17	14	3	1	—	222
Class 3(c)	43	37	23	23	18	18	12	4	—	—	178
Class 2(c)	41	13	6	10	7	12	8	—	—	—	97
Class 1	4	1	1	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	15
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Grade B	21	1	—	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	26
Grade C	48	2	2	2	3	1	3	1	—	—	62
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	72	7	4	4	7	11	11	—	—	—	116
Class 1	31	6	3	2	3	6	3	1	—	—	55
Senior Professional Officer	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Professional Officer	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Other Classifications	5	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	9
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	858	189	165	111	116	123	89	20	4	—	1 675
Unpaid inoperative staff	23	3	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	30
Total staff at 30 June 1998	881	192	167	112	117	123	89	20	4	—	1 705

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a) — continued

Year and Classification	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
FEMALE											
1996											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	801	175	166	131	135	91	66	40	8	14	1 627
1997											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1997	805	165	158	118	114	93	59	29	9	281	1 831
1998											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Executive Service	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Senior Officer											
Grade A	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	6
Grade B	18	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	19
Grade C	81	5	8	1	4	5	1	6	2	—	113
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6(c)	147	10	26	9	6	10	2	8	—	—	218
Class 5(c)	131	25	34	12	11	17	4	7	1	—	242
Class 4(c)	110	35	31	22	22	32	9	7	4	—	272
Class 3(c)	86	36	14	25	21	22	12	3	2	—	221
Class 2(c)	47	18	8	27	26	19	18	1	—	—	164
Class 1	5	2	3	2	2	10	2	4	—	—	30
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Grade B	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Grade C	16	1	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	20
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	24	2	2	3	3	—	1	—	—	—	35
Class 1	3	1	1	3	—	2	1	—	—	—	11
Senior Professional Officer	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	3
Professional Officer	4	2	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	10
Other Classifications	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	692	137	129	107	96	118	52	37	10	—	1 378
Unpaid inoperative staff	42	5	7	3	4	3	—	1	—	—	65
Total staff at 30 June 1998	734	142	136	110	100	121	52	38	10	—	1 443

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a) — continued

<i>Year and classification</i>	<i>CO</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>DPC</i>	<i>Total</i>
TOTAL											
1996											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	1 727	375	349	263	276	207	163	73	13	43	3 489
1997											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1997(r)	1 726	364	336	241	240	213	158	50	14	741	4 083
1998											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Senior Executive Service	29	1	1	1	1	1	2	—	—	—	36
Senior Officer											
Grade A	21	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	26
Grade B	61	5	6	4	4	5	4	1	—	—	90
Grade C	213	21	24	9	13	17	5	8	2	—	312
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6(c)	319	38	55	24	22	21	11	11	1	—	502
Class 5(c)	247	56	75	37	32	35	22	9	2	—	515
Class 4(c)	184	75	63	36	49	49	23	10	5	—	494
Class 3(c)	129	73	37	48	39	40	24	7	2	—	399
Class 2(c)	88	31	14	37	33	31	26	1	—	—	261
Class 1	9	3	4	2	2	19	2	4	—	—	45
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15
Grade B	25	1	—	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	30
Grade C	64	3	2	2	3	2	5	1	—	—	82
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	96	9	6	7	10	11	12	—	—	—	151
Class 1	34	7	4	5	3	8	4	1	—	—	66
Senior Professional Officer	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	4
Professional Officer	5	2	1	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	12
Other Classifications	6	1	—	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	11
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	1 550	326	294	218	212	241	141	57	14	—	3 053
Unpaid inoperative staff	65	8	9	4	5	3	—	1	—	—	95
Total staff at 30 June 1998	1 615	334	303	222	217	244	141	58	14	—	3 148

(a) Includes, also, the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*. Excludes casual staff employed for short periods for population surveys. (b) Being paid at the classification shown at 30 June 1998. (c) Includes Research Officer classifications with same maximum salaries.

(r) revised.

3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a)

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
FULL TIME EMPLOYEES									
1996									
Total staff at 30 June, 1996	1 748	1 293	3 041	88	155	243	1 836	1 448	3 284
1997									
Total staff at 30 June, 1997	1 752	1 335	3 087	468	316	784	2 220	1 651	3 871
1998									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	2	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	2
Senior Executive Service	31	5	36	—	—	—	31	5	36
Senior Officer									
Grade A	20	6	26	—	—	—	20	6	26
Grade B	70	18	88	—	—	—	70	18	88
Grade C	195	97	292	—	—	—	195	97	292
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	278	197	475	—	—	—	278	197	475
Class 5(c)	269	212	481	—	1	1	269	213	482
Class 4(c)	217	246	463	1	2	3	218	248	466
Class 3(c)	168	177	345	7	3	10	175	180	355
Class 2(c)	74	93	167	18	50	68	92	143	235
Class 1	6	10	16	9	16	25	15	26	41
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	12	2	14	—	—	—	12	2	14
Grade B	26	1	27	—	—	—	26	1	27
Grade C	61	15	76	—	—	—	61	15	76
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	112	24	136	1	1	2	113	25	138
Class 1	54	9	63	1	1	2	55	10	65
Senior Professional Officer	1	3	4	—	—	—	1	3	4
Professional Officer	2	5	7	—	—	—	2	5	7
Other Classifications	9	2	11	—	—	—	9	2	11
<i>Total operative and paid inoperative staff</i>	<i>1 607</i>	<i>1 123</i>	<i>2 730</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1 644</i>	<i>1 197</i>	<i>2 841</i>
Unpaid inoperative staff	29	55	84	—	—	—	29	55	84
Total Staff at 30 June 1998	1 636	1 178	2 814	37	74	111	1 673	1 252	2 925

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a) — continued

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
PART TIME EMPLOYEES									
1996									
Total staff at 30 June	25	168	193	1	11	12	26	179	205
1997									
Total staff at 30 June	32	173	205	1	6	7	33	179	212
1998									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Executive Service	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Officer									
Grade A	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grade B	1	1	2	—	—	—	1	1	2
Grade C	4	16	20	—	—	—	4	16	20
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	6	21	27	—	—	—	6	21	27
Class 5(c)	4	29	33	—	—	1	4	29	33
Class 4(c)	4	24	28	—	—	—	4	24	28
Class 3(c)	3	38	41	—	2	2	3	40	43
Class 2(c)	3	17	20	2	4	6	5	21	26
Class 1	—	1	1	—	3	3	—	4	4
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
Grade B	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	3	3
Grade C	1	5	6	—	—	—	1	5	6
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	3	10	13	—	—	—	3	10	13
Class 1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
Senior Professional Officer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Professional Officer	—	4	4	—	1	1	—	5	5
<i>Total operative and paid inoperative staff</i>	29	171	200	2	10	12	31	181	212
Unpaid inoperative staff	1	9	10	—	1	1	1	10	11
Total staff at 30 June 1998	30	180	210	2	11	13	32	191	223

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1998(a) — continued

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
TOTAL									
1996									
Total staff at 30 June, 1996	1 773	1 461	3 234	89	166	255	1 862	1 627	3 489
1997									
Total staff at 30 June, 1997(r)	1 784	1 508	3 292	469	322	791	2 253	1 831	4 083
1998									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	2	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	2
Senior Executive Service	31	5	36	—	—	—	31	5	36
Senior Officer									
Grade A	20	6	26	—	—	—	20	6	26
Grade B	71	19	90	—	—	—	71	19	90
Grade C	199	113	312	—	—	—	199	113	312
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	284	218	502	—	—	—	284	218	502
Class 5(c)	273	241	514	—	1	1	273	242	515
Class 4(c)	221	270	491	1	2	3	222	272	494
Class 3(c)	171	215	386	7	5	12	178	220	398
Class 2(c)	77	110	187	20	54	74	97	164	261
Class 1	6	11	17	9	19	28	15	30	45
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	12	3	15	—	—	—	12	3	15
Grade B	26	4	30	—	—	—	26	4	30
Grade C	62	20	82	—	—	—	62	20	82
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	115	34	149	1	1	2	116	35	151
Class 1	54	10	64	1	1	2	55	11	66
Senior Professional Officer	1	3	4	—	—	—	1	3	4
Professional Officer	2	9	11	—	1	1	2	10	12
Other Classifications	9	2	11	—	—	—	9	2	11
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	1 636	1 294	2 930	39	84	123	1 675	1 378	3 053
Unpaid inoperative staff	30	64	94	—	1	1	30	65	95
Total Staff at 30 June 1998	1 666	1 358	3 024	39	85	124	1 705	1 443	3 148

(a) Includes, also, the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*. Excludes casual staff employed for short periods for population surveys. (b) Being paid at the classification shown at 30 June 1998. (c) Includes Research Officer classifications with same maximum salaries.
(r) revised.

3.4 REPRESENTATION OF EEO GROUPS: PERMANENT ABS STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1998

Salary range	Number of staff and percentage of total staff						EEO Coverage
	Total Staff	Women	NESB1	NESB2	ATSI	PWD	
\$26,457 and below (Number includes Administratavie Services Officer Grade 1)	27	14	2	1	6	2	23
%	—	51.9	7.4	3.7	22.2	7.4	85.2
\$27,091 to \$30,042 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 2)	193	116	25	10	2	19	167
%	—	60.1	13.0	5.2	1.0	9.8	86.5
\$30,857 to \$33,304 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 3)	401	227	40	37	7	20	345
%	—	56.6	10.0	9.2	1.7	5.0	86.0
\$34,391 to \$37,341 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 4)	580	302	63	53	1	31	507
%	—	52.1	10.9	9.1	0.2	5.3	87.4
\$38,359 to \$40,675 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 5)	530	251	51	47	1	20	471
%	—	47.4	9.6	8.9	0.2	3.8	88.9
\$41,430 to \$47,591 (Number includes Administratvie Services Officer Grade 6)	672	265	54	41	2	34	606
%	—	39.4	8.0	6.1	0.3	5.1	90.2
\$50,931 to \$55,170 (Number includes Senior Officer Grade C)	409	142	30	19	3	12	377
%	—	34.7	7.3	4.6	0.7	2.9	92.2
\$57,983 to \$66,175 (Number includes Senior Officer Grade B)	126	26	7	5	0	6	120
%	—	20.6	5.6	4.0	0.0	48.0	95.2
\$68,497 only (Number includes Senior Officer Grade A)	43	9	3	1	0	1	35
%	—	20.9	7.0	2.3	0.0	2.3	81.4
\$77,011 and above (Number includes Senior Executive Service)	42	5	2	0	0	4	35
%	—	11.9	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5	83.3
Total	3 023	1 357	277	214	22	149	2 686
% of total staff	—	44.9	9.2	7.1	0.7	4.9	88.9

EEO groups are not mutually exclusive and any individual officer may be included in more than one group. Percentages are based on total staff. Salary groupings are based on maximum salary for a classification. Inoperative staff are included. EEO coverage is the number of staff who have elected to provide EEO Information.

Key:

- NESB1 — People with non-English speaking background, first generation.
 NESB2 — People with non-English speaking background, second generation.
 ATSI — Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
 PWD — People with disabilities.

3.5 STAFF ENGAGED UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ACT 1905 1997-98 (staff years)

Purpose	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Interviewer enumerated statistical collections (mainly household surveys)	293	290	248
Census of Population and Housing (including preparations for census)	25	1 232	—
Total	318	1 522	248

3.6 CONSULTANTS ENGAGED BY ABS, 1997-98

Year	Number of consultants engaged(a)	Expenditure \$'000
1996-97	133	3 153
1997-98	126	2 856

(a) The number of consultancy projects undertaken during the financial year. Some consultants have undertaken more than one consultancy.

3.7 ABS INTAKE AND SEPARATIONS OF PERMANENT STAFF, 1997-98(a) (number)

Method of intake and type of separation	SES	Non SES	Total
Intake			
Appointment (b) — Graduate (c)	—	73	73
— Other	—	27	27
Promotion or transfer from outside the ABS	—	54	54
Total Intake	—	154	154
Separations			
Promotion or transfer to outside the ABS	—	108	108
Resignation	1	134	135
Death	—	2	2
Dismissal	—	—	—
Retirement — Invalidity	—	7	7
Retirement — Under 76R, <i>Public Service Act 1922</i>	4	—	4
Retirement — Under 76W, <i>Public Service Act 1922</i>	—	144	144
Retirement — Maximum Age	—	3	3
Retirement — Election by Officer — Age 55-59 years	—	2	2
Retirement — Election by Officer — Age 60-64 years	—	1	1
Total Separations	5	401	406

(a) Excludes temporary inward and outward transfers. (b) Includes appointment of staff following temporary employment. (c) From National Graduate Recruitment Campaign.

**3.8 ABS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE STAFF BY SALARY LEVEL, GENDER AND LOCATION AT
30 JUNE 1998
(number)**

Year and location	Salary Band			Total	
	1	2	3	Male	Female
1996 Total	28	6	2	33	3
1997 Total	25	6	2	30	3
1998					
Australian Capital Territory	22	6	2	25	5
New South Wales	1	—	—	1	—
Victoria	—	—	—	—	—
Queensland	1	—	—	1	—
Western Australia	1	—	—	1	—
South Australia	1	—	—	1	—
Tasmania	1	—	—	1	—
Total	27	6	2	30	5

**3.9 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND PAY — NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE SES OFFICERS BY
PERCENTAGE OF MAXIMUM PERMISSABLE PERFORMANCE PAY RECEIVED**

Range	Number of SES officers
0–20%	30
21–40%	0
41–60%	6
61–80%	0
81–100%	2
Total	38
Total performance pay	\$75 828

It is ABS policy to ensure that conditions and opportunities exist for the involvement of staff in the management of ABS activities.

This policy is reflected in Objective 4 of the ABS Corporate Plan: *"A team of people with the skills and motivation to achieve the ABS mission"*. The ABS strategy to achieve this objective includes the fostering of good participative management practices. The ABS continues to have a mandatory selection criterion which requires all candidates for positions involving staff management to demonstrate that they have an understanding of, and a commitment to participative work practices.

The continued introduction of new information technologies throughout the ABS has contributed significantly to staff access to corporate information.

As part of Government reforms, some key directions in terms of the workplace environment were established. The importance of participative management is clearly captured in the APS value which *establishes co-operative workplace relations based on consultation and communication*, a theme which the ABS wishes to reflect in its workplace arrangements. As stated earlier in this report, considerable effort was expended during the last several months of the year in consulting and sharing information about new industrial agreements under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. Those agreements are intended to include formal consultative arrangements.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Appendix 5

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is committed to the health, safety and welfare of all ABS employees. A dedicated unit in Central Office, complemented by individual officers in Regional Offices, ensures that the requirements of the relevant legislation are observed.

A network of Occupational Health and Safety Committees is the vehicle for consultation on issues affecting all staff.

During 1997–98, 13 staff were selected and trained as Health and Safety Representatives under the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* (OHS Act).

There were no notifications under sections 30, 45, 46 and 47 of the OHS Act. Twelve notifications were made under section 68 of the OHS Act.

Accidents

The number of reported accidents and incidents for 1997–98 was 313. This compares with 441 in 1996–97. The reported accidents fall into the following broad categories:

REPORTED ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS, 1997–98

<i>Accidents</i>	<i>1996–97</i>	<i>1997–98</i>
Motor vehicle/journey related accidents	78	81
Accidents as a result of sporting injuries	21	13
Back injuries	25	27
Occupational overuse syndrome	73	49
Stress	6	8
Other work based incidents and accidents	238	135
Total	441	313

In 1997–98, 65 accidents resulted in 508 lost working days. Comparable figures for 1996–97 were 182 accidents and 1080 lost working days.

Compensation claims

During 1997–98, 104 compensation claims (compared with 182 in 1996–97) were submitted, 44 (69 in 1996–97) of which required implementation of a Return to Work Plan. 75 cases (62 in 1996–97) were closed during the year.

Under the Fitness for Duty Guidelines, 83 still required case management, and 59 cases were closed during 1997–98.

Staff counselling

The ABS continued to provide all staff with access to a staff counselling service using a combination of external providers and internal staff counsellors. Feedback from staff on all service providers indicated an overall high level of satisfaction.

Comcare premiums

As a result of active workplace prevention strategies, case management and rehabilitation during 1997–98, the Comcare premium for 1998–99 has been set at one per cent of total salary.

COMCARE WORKERS COMPENSATION PREMIUM RATE

(% of wage and salary expenditure)

	1992–93	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99
ABS	1.36	1.2	1.08	1.61	1.84	1.47	1
Agency pool average	1.7	1.56	1.4	1.75	1.6	1.2	1

Achievements

Major OHAS activities during 1997–98 included:

- Occupational health and safety components were included in orientation, supervision and middle management training programs. In addition, on-the-job training sessions were conducted on a variety of OHAS issues.
- Continuation of the *Working Comfortably* campaign with specific training on safe mouse operation. This is an essential activity as the ABS continues its business development and program delivery within an increasingly complex computing environment.
- Internal safety audits and workplace assessments were conducted in all offices. This included individual assessment and training in the correct adjustment and use of ergonomic furniture.
- Awareness sessions and seminars on contemporary issues were conducted in house by the Employee Assistance Program providers. The session topics included: Work and Family Interface, Managing Teenagers (Independence versus Rebellion), Care of Self or Proactiveness, and Navigating Change.
- Review and testing of the Rehabilitation Case Management function in Central Office using a contractor to provide some comparative case management services.
- Enhancement of the recording and reporting system for workplace hazards, injury and compensation case management.
- Revision of return-to-work procedures focussing on individual case needs to achieve an early and safe return to work after accidents, illness or injuries.
- The introduction of strategies in the return-to-work procedures to increase the accountability for and involvement of line managers in health and safety matters.

As required by section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the following statement is provided on the structure of the ABS and how members of the public can gain access to information held by the Bureau.

ABS Establishment, Organisation and Functions

Chapter 1, and Appendixes 1 to 3 of this report provide details on the ABS role, structure and functions.

Powers

The decision-making powers of the ABS and other powers associated with the discharge of its functions affecting members of the public are:

- the power to collect statistics including the powers to request or direct persons to provide information and to enter into premises other than private accommodation for the purpose of collecting statistics;
- the power to initiate prosecutions against persons for failing to supply information if directed; and
- the power to publish statistics and release information.

Consultative Arrangements

The role of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, which is the ABS's peak consultative body, is described in Chapter 1. Further information about the consultative arrangements operating in the ABS is provided in the Internal and External Scrutiny section of Chapter 1.

Categories of Documents

Documents open to public access upon payment of a fee: the ABS does not hold any of these types of document.

Documents available for purchase or customarily available free of charge: see the Dissemination Services, Marketing and Public Relations, Client Services and Library Services components, described in detail in Chapter 4. The ABS has a wide range of statistical publications available for sale through its Bookshops.

Other Documents

Government and Parliament: various policy-related documents, ministerial briefings, ministerial correspondence, replies to Parliamentary questions, and tabling documents.

Conferences, etc.: agenda papers, submissions, and records of proceedings of internal and external conferences, management meetings and workshops.

Statistical and statistical service projects: research, development and evaluation papers, records of consultations with suppliers and users of data, statistical classifications, lists of businesses, etc., maps, data collection, processing and publication manuals and instructions, mailing lists, statistical returns and statistical data holdings.

Administration and management: work program and planning documents, finance, staff and establishment papers and manuals, personnel files, files relating to recruitment, selection and promotion of staff, staff development and training papers, office services documents and tenders.

Privacy: a record of the extent and nature of the ABS's holdings of personal information, as contained in the *Personal Information Digest* published by the Privacy Commissioner.

General: correspondence, papers, etc. filed by subject, manuals or more general subjects, reviews and administrative circulars.

A significant part of the ABS's information holdings is information collected under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This information is exempt from the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

ABS Freedom of Information (FOI) Activities

Comprehensive information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* has been supplied to all ABS staff. Matters relating to the operation of the Act within the ABS are the responsibility of the Policy Secretariat Branch in Canberra, and authority for decision making under the Act has been delegated to the Deputy Australian Statistician, Population Statistics Group and the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division. Policy Secretariat Branch staff attend meetings of the FOI Practitioners' Forum run by the Attorney-General's Department and other meetings conducted by private legal practitioners.

The following table provides details of FOI activities during the years 1993–94 to 1997–98 inclusive. No requests were made to the ABS under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* during 1997–98.

FOI ACTIVITIES, 1993-94 TO 1997-98
(number)

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Requests received for					
Statistical information	—	—	1	1	—
Personal papers	—	—	—	1	—
Administrative documents	4	2	2	—	—
Total	4	2	3	2	0
Decisions made					
Access granted in full	1	2	1	2	—
Access granted in part	1	—	—	—	—
Request transferred to another agency	—	—	—	—	—
Request withdrawn	3	—	1	—	—
Access refused	—	—	—	—	—
Documents not in existence	1	—	1	—	—
Total	6	2	3	2	0
Decisions outstanding at end of year	—	—	—	—	—
Review of decisions by principal officer	1	—	—	—	—
Appeals to Administrative Appeals Tribunal	1	—	—	—	—

Where to get information

Freedom of Information Inquiries

All inquiries concerning access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* may be directed to the Freedom of Information Contact Officer, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unit 5, Cameron Offices, Chandler Street, Belconnen, ACT, 2616 (PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616); telephone (02) 6252 5760.

General Information

The ABS offers an initial contact point, for all information requests in each ABS office, as listed below:

Central Office, Canberra

Telephone: (02) 6252 6627
Facsimile: (02) 6253 1404
Mail: PO Box 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: Unit 5, Cameron Offices
Chandler Street
Belconnen

New South Wales

Telephone: (02) 9268 4611
Facsimile: (02) 9268 4668
Mail: GPO Box 796
Sydney NSW 2001
Counter: Level 5, St Andrew's House
Sydney Square
Sydney

Victoria

Telephone: (03) 9615 7755
Facsimile: (03) 9615 7798
Mail: GPO Box 2796Y
Melbourne Vic 3001
Counter: Level 5, CU Tower
485 Latrobe Street
Melbourne

Queensland

Telephone: (07) 3222 6351
Facsimile: (07) 3222 6283
Mail: GPO Box 9817
Brisbane QLD 4001
Counter: 18th Floor
313 Adelaide Street
Brisbane

Western Australia

Telephone: (08) 9360 5140
Facsimile: (08) 9360 5955
Mail: GPO Box K881
Perth WA 6001
Counter: Level 16, Exchange Plaza
2 The Esplanade
Perth

South Australia

Telephone: (08) 8237 7100
Facsimile: (08) 8237 7566
Mail: GPO Box 2272
Adelaide SA 5001
Counter: 7th Floor
Commonwealth Centre
55 Currie Street
Adelaide

Tasmania

Telephone: (03) 6220 5800
Facsimile: (03) 6220 5995
Mail: GPO Box 66A
Hobart Tas 7001
Counter: Ground Floor
200 Collins Street
Hobart

Australian Capital Territory

Telephone: (02) 6252 6627
Facsimile: (02) 6207 0282
Mail: PO Box 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: 9th Floor, FAI House
197 London Circuit
Canberra City

Northern Territory

Telephone: (08) 8943 2111
Facsimile: (08) 8981 1218
Mail: GPO Box 3796
Darwin NT 0801
Counter: 5th Floor
81 Smith Street
Darwin

Listed below are inquiries by Parliamentary Committees with which the ABS was involved during 1997-98, including a summary of significant comments and recommendations relating to the ABS and a summary of action taken by the ABS.

Senate Economics References Committee: Inquiry into outworkers in the garment industry.

The report was tabled in December 1996, and ABS comments on the Government's response were sought in March 1997. The report recommended that the ABS conduct a comprehensive survey of the number of home-based workers across all industries, in conjunction with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) utilizing information on numbers of outworkers from the Reportable Payments System (RPS).

The Government's response to the report, tabled in September 1997, advised that the ABS periodically conducts a survey which provides a reliable measure of the number and characteristics of persons employed at home by industry. This survey was last conducted in September 1995, and is scheduled to be conducted again in July 1999.

The response noted practical difficulties involved in the use of ATO information in connection with ABS surveys. It also noted that for technical reasons the RPS was unlikely to assist in identifying the number of outworkers in the garment industry. On balance, it was recognised that information from the ATO was unlikely to contribute additional information regarding outworkers or other areas of home based processing.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit: Inquiry into internet commerce.

The report was tabled in June 1998. It recommended that the ABS conduct an annual Household Use of Information Technology Survey and, wherever possible, include internet commerce and usage data items into all existing business and economic surveys.

The Government's response to the inquiry has yet to be finalised.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Inquiry into the treatment of census forms.

The report was tabled in May 1998. It recommended that name-identified information contained in future census forms be retained, but that these records be closed for a period of 99 years and access granted to researchers in the 100th year. It also recommended that legislation be implemented to give effect to

these recommendations, and that only officers of the ABS or the National Archives of Australia are to process or handle census information.

The Government's response to the inquiry has yet to be finalised.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works: a Standing Committee overseeing Commonwealth expenditure on public works.

The ABS and the then Domestic Property Group, Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) were requested to brief the Committee in relation to a DoFA proposal to spend \$6.25 million on rectification works for the Cameron Offices which house the central office of the ABS. The briefing took place on 23 October 1997.

Consultants had been engaged by DoFA to prepare and cost the initial scope of rectification works. This action followed continuing ABS concern about occupational health and safety issues, particularly fire safety, within the complex. The Committee was not persuaded that the expenditure of \$6.25 million was justified given the expected future life of the building and requested that the scope of works be reviewed.

DoFA subsequently reviewed the scope of works in conjunction with the ABS. Essential works were agreed upon at a significantly lower cost.

DOCUMENTS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT

Appendix 8

PROPOSALS FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

In accordance with section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the following proposals for collection of information for statistical purposes were tabled in both Houses of Parliament during 1997–98.

TABLING — PROPOSALS FOR COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES, 1997–98

Date tabled(a)	Statistical collection(b)
25 August 1997	Population survey monitor 1997–98 Agricultural units survey
27 August 1997	Survey of overseas tourism marketing expenditure
28 August 1997	Innovation survey 1996–97
1 September 1997	Stone fruit growers survey
22 September 1997	New topics in the monthly population survey: New South Wales—part-time, temporary and casual employment Victoria—changing work patterns Queensland—travel to and from work and place of study Western Australia—eligibility for and uptake of seniors card and associated issues South Australia—travel to work and place of education Tasmania—transport patterns and preferences Northern Territory—work related injuries and illnesses Australian Capital Territory—shopping preferences
22 October 1997	Collection of nursery, cut flower, florist and turf statistics
28 October 1997	Survey of financial information
19 November 1997	Survey of disability, ageing and carers Agricultural commodity survey
2 March 1998	Household expenditure survey Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: crime and safety survey
30 March 1998	Service industries surveys 1997–98
31 March 1998	Survey of sheep and beef meat production in WA 1998
1 April 1998	Collection of building approvals information
12 May 1998	Survey of manufacturers Consumer price index Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: private health insurance survey
26 May 1998	Museums survey 1997–98 Survey of book publishers 1997–98 Information technology survey 1997–98 Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: non-standard employment
22 June 1998	
30 June 1998	New topics in the monthly population survey: New South Wales—household safety Victoria—safety in the home Queensland—survey of persons aged 50 years and over Western Australia—housing motivations and intentions Tasmania—community safety Australian Capital Territory—public transport usage and migration patterns Population survey monitor 1998–99

(a) If the proposal was tabled on different dates in the two Houses of Parliament, the earlier of the two dates is shown.

(b) Unless otherwise indicated by the title, the statistical collection is a national project.

DISCLOSURE OF LISTS OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES

In accordance with clause 6 of the Statistics Determination (Statutory Rules 1983 No. 19) made under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, details of the following disclosures of lists of names, addresses and other information to the specified Department or Authority, were tabled in both Houses of Parliament in 1997–98.

TABLING — DISCLOSURE OF LISTS OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES, 1997–98

<i>Date tabled(a)</i>	<i>Information released</i>
22 September 1997	Names and addresses of establishments for selected industries to the ACT Department of Business, the Arts, Sport and Tourism
24 November 1997	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
3 December 1997	Names and addresses of businesses to the Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business
25 May 1998	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation

(a) If the proposal was tabled on different dates in the two Houses of Parliament, the earlier of the two dates is shown.

DISCLOSURE OF UNIDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

Appendix 9

The Statistics Determination (Statutory Rules 1983 No. 19) made by the Minister under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, enables the Statistician to disclose certain classes of information. Disclosures of unidentifiable information under clause 7 of the Statistics Determination are shown in the following table.

STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS — DISCLOSURE OF UNIDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION, 1997–98

<i>Survey Title</i>	<i>Survey Date</i>
Australian health survey	1983
Employment and unemployment patterns survey	1994 to 1996
Household expenditure survey	1975–76
Household expenditure survey	1988–89
Household expenditure survey	1993–94 (2nd edition)
Income and housing costs survey	1994–95
Income and housing costs survey	1995–96
Income and housing costs survey	1994–95 and 1995–96 (combined)
National aboriginal and torres strait islander survey	1994
National health survey	1995
National nutrition survey	1995
Population survey monitor	September and November 1996, February and May 1997 (combined)
Population survey monitor	February 1997
Population survey monitor	May 1997
Population survey monitor	August 1997
Population survey monitor	November 1997
Population survey monitor	February 1998
Training and education survey	1993
Women's safety survey	1996

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

Appendix 10

AMOUNTS PAID BY, OR ON BEHALF OF, THE ABS TO ADVERTISING AGENCIES, MARKET RESEARCH, POLLING, DIRECT MAIL AND MEDIA ADVERTISING ORGANISATIONS

<i>Name of organisation paid</i>	<i>Amount \$</i>
Advertising	
TMP Worldwide	106 308
Reed Business	6 406
South Pacific Science Press	3 440
Eryl Morgan	2 000
Local Government Focus Magazine	2 000
Executive Media	1 895
Queensland Chamber of Commerce	1 400
West Australian News	1 288
Australian Local Government Job Directory	1 250
Davies Brothers	1 220
Franchise Council of Australia	950
Chamber of Commerce	900
APN Business Magazine	750
Peter Isaacson Publications	750
Business Queensland	700
Hassel, Hunt and Moore	700
Hastwell Williamson Raggatt	560
Business News	468
ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce	230
Yellow Pages	171
Business Council News	150
Canberra Business Council	150
<i>Total</i>	133 686
Market Research and Polling Organisations	
Woolcott Research	17 600
<i>Total</i>	17 600
Direct Mail Organisations	
National Mailing and Marketing	110 333
Paragon Printers	5 025
Instant Colour Press	4 359
Drake Solutions	3 025
The List Bank	2 720
Goanna Print	1 150
Inprint	670
Four Design Group	350
Bh Graphics	220
Reed Exhibitions	125
<i>Total</i>	127 977
Total	279 263

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS SURVEYED DURING 1997-98

	<i>Survey topics</i>
National Surveys	Job search experience of unemployed persons Retrenchment and redundancy Weekly earnings of employees Employment benefits Trade union membership Working arrangements Multiple jobholders Persons not in the labour force Underemployment Educational attendance Retirement and retirement intentions Labour mobility Environment : water use and conservation Crime and safety Transition from education to work Health insurance
State/Territory Surveys	Part-time, casual and temporary employment (NSW) Changing work patterns (Vic) Travel to and from work and educational institutions (Qld) Travel to work and school (SA) Eligibility for and update of Western Australian seniors card, and associated issues (WA) Transport patterns and preferences (Tas) Work-related injury and illness (NT) Shopping preferences (ACT)

TOPICS SURVEYED DURING 1997-98

	<i>Survey topics</i>
September 1997	Sports participation Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Art and craft purchases Individual donations Smoke detectors (Vic only)
November 1997	Sports participation Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Household use of energy Fossil fuel usage (NSW only) Art and craft purchases Individual donations Sports participation Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Household use of energy Fossil fuel usage (NSW only) Household use of information technology Cultural venues (SA only) Alcohol consumption Environmental issues
May 1998	Sports participation Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Household use of energy (NSW and SA only) Fossil fuel usage (NSW only) Household use of information technology Cultural venues (SA only)

PROFESSIONAL PAPERS BY ABS OFFICERS

Appendix 13

Officers of the ABS prepared the following professional papers which were presented or published between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998.

Zia Abbasi	<i>Informal sector statistics: Australian views on the international definition, minimum data set and selected data collection issues.</i> Presented to the Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group), Ankara, 28–30 April 1998.
Tony Barnes	<i>Issues, challenges and initiatives for statistics and data collection about Indigenous Australians.</i> Presented to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (Australia) Benchmarking Workshop, Canberra, 18 November 1997.
Frank Blanchfield	<i>Geocoding—the ABS experience.</i> Published in Spatial Edition: spatial data news from the Commonwealth, issue no. 21, March 1998.
Frank Blanchfield	<i>The spatial dimensions of the Census of Population and Housing.</i> Presented to the Mapping Sciences Institute (Australia) Conference, Perth, May 1998.
Dave Bennison	<i>The introduction of object oriented technology into the Australian Bureau of Statistics.</i> Presented to the LS – Ken (Leading – edge Systems Users Group) in Tokyo/Narita, 5 June 1998.
Dale Chatwin	<i>Harvesting the Lotus: developing, managing and delivering library services in a Lotus Notes environment.</i> Presented to the 9th VALA Biennial Conference and Exhibition, Melbourne, 28–30 January 1998.
Sarah Coleman, Nicholas Stathis, Geoff Heffernan and Alan Mackay	Data collection for environmental monitoring of the agriculture industry. Presented to the Agricultural Statistics 2000 Conference, Washington, 25–27 March 1998.
Joan Cunningham	<i>Implications of changing Indigenous population estimates for monitoring health trends.</i> Published in Australasian Epidemiologist, the newsletter of the Australasian Epidemiological Association, May 1998.
Judy Daniel, Leanne Johnson, Steven Kennedy, Ken Tallis and Richard Webster	<i>Measuring outputs, inputs and productivity for Australian public acute care hospitals.</i> Presented to the 19th Australian Conference of Health Economists, Melbourne, 10–11 July 1997.
Brian Donaghue	<i>Providing greater transparency in government financial reporting.</i> Presented to the Conference on Accrual Budgeting, organised by the International Quality and Productivity Centre, Canberra, 17 September 1997.

- Rob Edwards *Developments in macro—economic statistics.* Presented to the 1997 Conference of Economists, Hobart, 29 September–1 October 1997.
- Rob Edwards *Measuring inflation.* Presented to Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers (NSW Chapter), Sydney, 11 September 1997.
- Stan Fleetwood *Development of common tourism statistics standards.* Presented to the Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference, Gold Coast, 12–14 February 1998.
- Stan Fleetwood *Tourism statistics in the ABS.* Presented to the Australian Tourism Research Workshop, Melbourne, 26–27 March 1998.
- Kiri Gaminiratne *Dementia mortality among the elderly in Australia, 1981–95: trends in age and sex differentials.* Presented to the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Twenty-third General Conference, Beijing, 11–17 October 1997.
- Kiri Gaminiratne *Trends in accidental and violent deaths among children and young people, 1982–96.* Presented to the Kids First Agenda for Change Conference, Melbourne, 2–3 April 1998.
- Lindy Ingham *Proposed treatment of film originals in Australia's national accounts.* Presented to the Joint OECD/ESCAP Meeting on National Accounts, Bangkok, 4–8 May 1998.
- Leanne Johnson, Steven Kennedy and Ken Tallis *Measuring aggregate productivity for government services—issues and some experimental estimates.* Presented to the International Quality and Productivity Conference (IQPC), Sydney, 16–18 July 1997.
- Tony Johnson *Implementation of SNA93—Educating the user, the ABS strategy.* Paper presented to the Joint OECD/ESCAP Meeting on National Accounts, Bangkok, 4–8 May 1998.
- Steven Kennedy and Jeff Borland* *A wage curve for Australia.* Discussion paper no. 372, Australian National University, Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Papers, August 1997.
- Steven Kennedy and Jeff Borland* *Dimensions, structure and history of Australian unemployment.* Discussion paper no. 388, Australian National University, Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Papers, June 1998.
- Harry Kroon *Statistical profile of rural young people.* Presented to the DEETYA Seminar on Young People in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia, Canberra, 12 November 1997.
- Harry Kroon *Budget standards, living standards and income adequacy.* Prepared for the Expert Group on Poverty Statistics (Rio Group) Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, May 1998.

- Mike Langan and Marion McEwin *ABS data on child health.* Presented to the Workshop on the National Child Health Information Framework, Canberra, 24–25 March 1998.
- Roger Mablesen *The public library sector : the size of it all.* Presented to the Public Libraries Section and Reference and Information Service Section (PUBRAISS) Conference, Brisbane, 9–12 November 1997.
- Karen MacLennan, Dan Black and Prue Phillips Brown* *Australia-Indonesia relations: anatomy of an intergovernmental agreement for sub-national statistics in the Northern Territory and the Eastern Provinces.* Australian National University, North Australia Research Unit, 1997.
- Maureen K. McDonald, Jane Griffin-Warwicke and Damian O'Rourke *Poverty measurement in Australia: different assumptions, different results.* Presented to the National Social Policy Conference, Sydney, 16–18 July 1997.
- Marion McEwin and Maureen K. McDonald *Concept and definition of household income for international comparisons.* Presented to the Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Household Income Statistics (Canberra Group), Voorburg, Netherlands, March 1998.
- Graeme Oakley *The ABS environment accounts project : linking environment and economic information.* Presented to the Joint ECE/EUROSTAT Work Session on Methodological Issues of Environment Statistics, Neuchatel, Switzerland, 22–25 September 1997.
- Graeme Oakley *Data collection using ABS surveys : how to get environmental information using existing collections.* Presented to the Joint ECE/EUROSTAT Work Session on Methodological Issues of Environment Statistics, Neuchatel, Switzerland, 22–25 September 1997.
- Graeme Oakley *Sustainable development indicators in Australia: progress on their development.* Presented to the Joint ECE/EUROSTAT Work Session on Methodological Issues of Environment Statistics, Neuchatel, Switzerland, 22–25 September 1997.
- Martin O'Brien *Employment patterns of small and large business.* Presented to the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand Annual Conference, Coffs Harbour, 21–24 September 1997.
- Bill Pattinson and David McGeachie *A draft definition of the ICT sector.* Presented to the Voorburg Group Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark, September 1997.
- Bill Pattinson and Clem Tozer *Growth and performance of Australian SMEs: the results of the 1996 Business Longitudinal Survey.* Presented to the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand Annual Conference, Coffs Harbour, 21–24 September 1997.

- Bill Pattinson *Information and communications technologies—a statistical perspective.* Presented to the BTCE Communications Forum, Canberra, 2–3 October 1997.
- Bill Pattinson *Micro business in Australia.* Presented to the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme Annual Conference, Sydney, October 1997.
- Warren Richter *Managing the information warehouse.* Presented to the Conference on Output Databases, Stockholm, Sweden, 24–26 September 1997.
- Sheridan Roberts and Peter Haines *Alternative methodologies for collecting Australian motor vehicle use statistics.* Presented to the 21st Australian Transport Research Forum, Adelaide, 24–25 September 1997.
- Geoff Robertson and Mark Lound *Australian globalisation statistics: past, present and future.* Presented to the Workshop on Research Issues on Foreign Direct Investment, Adelaide, 14–15 May 1998. Also published in Australian Economic Indicators, March 1998.
- Phillipa Scurrah *The Indigenous identification standard classification question and issues for disability.* Presented to the Indigenous Disability Data Workshop, Canberra, 1–2 April 1998.
- Tim Skinner, John Struik and Dave Nauenburg *Coding editing and imputation of data.* Presented to the International Seminar on Census Methodology, Portsmouth, UK, 29 April–1 May 1998.
- Tim Skinner, John Struik, Anthony Davis and Andrew Lamb *Data collection methodology.* Presented to the International Seminar on Census Methodology, Portsmouth, UK, 29 April–1 May 1998.
- Tim Skinner, John Struik and Martin Butterfield *Managing the Census.* Presented to the International Seminar on Census Methodology, Portsmouth, UK, 29 April–1 May 1998.
- Tim Skinner, John Struik and Paul Williams *Underenumeration, client orientation, protection of privacy and respondent burden.* Presented to the International Seminar on Census Methodology, Portsmouth, UK, 29 April–1 May 1998.
- John Struik *Implementation of the CPC in Australia.* Presented to the Meeting of the UN Expert Group on Social and Economic Classifications, New York, December 1997.
- Glen Sward, Geoff Heffernan and Alan Mackay *Experience with annual censuses of agriculture.* Presented to the Agricultural Statistics 2000 Conference, Washington, 25–27 March 1998.
- Clem Tozer *The Australian business longitudinal survey.* Published in Small Enterprise Research: the journal of the SEAAZ, vol. 5, no. 1, 1997.
- Dennis Trewin *Measuring inflation.* Presented to the 51st International Statistical Institute Session, Istanbul, 18–26 August 1997.

- Dennis Trewin *A review of measurement error effects on the analysis of survey data.* Published in *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*, eds Lars Lyberg...[et al.], New York, Wiley, 1997.
- Andrew Webster *Connecting with families.* Presented to the Anglican Diocesan Conference, Adelaide, 15–18 May 1998.
- Jennie Widdowson *Ideas and options for collection of disability data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from the Population Census.* Presented to the Indigenous Disability Data Workshop, Canberra, 1–2 April 1998.
- Keith Woolford *Review of the consumer price index.* Presented to the Economic Society of Australia Victorian Branch, Melbourne, 3 November 1997.

* Not an ABS officer.

SPECIAL ARTICLES IN EARLIER ABS ANNUAL REPORTS

Appendix 14

Special articles have been included in most ABS annual reports to present information and views on important longer-term or broad issues affecting the nation's statistical service. A list of the articles in earlier annual reports is given below, showing in brackets after each article title the year of the annual report in which the article appeared and the part of that report where it can be found.

What the ABS Does (1975–76; section 2).

The Collection of Information (1976–77; section 2).

Forward Planning in the ABS (1977–78; section 2).

Preparations for the 1981 Census of Population and Housing (1978–79; section 2).

The Accuracy and Reliability of Estimates of National Income and Expenditure (1979–80; section 2).

Minimising Reporting Burden (1980–81; section 2).

A Decade's Work Program (1981–82; section 2).

The ABS Program of Population Surveys (1983–84; pages 7 to 11, supplemented by appendix 5).

The ABS Program of Industry Collections (1984–85; pages 8 to 13, supplemented by appendix 5).

Dissemination of Statistics by the ABS (1985–86; pages 9 to 14).

ABS Corporate Plan (1986–87; chapter 2).

Health Statistics and the Report of the Better Health Commission (1986–87; chapter 3).

The Role of a National Statistical Office (1986–87; appendix 10).

Statistics and Privacy (1987–88; chapter 3).

Media Liaison for ABS Health Survey (1987–88; appendix 12).

A Quart out of a Pint Pot (1988–89; chapter 2) — this article examines how the ABS increased significantly the range, timeliness and quality of its statistical products and services over the preceding 13 years, with a static level of resources.

Household Expenditure Surveys in Australia : A Chronology (1988–89; appendix 15).

Complaints to the Australian Press Council (1988–89; appendix 16).

The ABS in the Marketplace (1989–90; chapter 2).

The 1991 Census of Population and Housing (1990–91; chapter 2, Population Census).

Security of ABS Data Holdings (1992–93; chapter 3).

Reducing Respondent Load (1992–93; chapter 2).

The 1996 Census of Population and Housing (1993–94; chapter 2).

Retirement of Mr Ian Castles AO, Australian Statistician, 1986–1994 (1994–95; chapter 1).

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (1994–95; chapter 2).

Developments in the Australian National Accounts (1995–96; chapter 2).

Destruction of Census Forms (1995–96; chapter 3).

The Pint Pot Revisited (1996–97; chapter 2).

The 1996 Census of Population and Housing (1996–97; chapter 3).

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Appendix 15

In addition to information contained in the ABS Annual Report, information on the following subjects applicable to the ABS is available on request.

The contact officer for such requests is the Director, Secretariat, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cameron Offices, Belconnen, ACT 2616 (PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616) – telephone (02) 6252 5760 or facsimile (02) 6252 8017.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

- Social justice
- Access and Equity
- Status of women
- Equal employment opportunity

STAFFING MATTERS

- Performance appraisal and performance based pay
- Organisation and People Development
- Interchange program
- Senior executives classified by level, age and length of APS service

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- Claims and losses
- Purchasing
- Information technology purchasing arrangements
- Payment of accounts
- Consultancy services

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY

- Fraud control
- Reports by the Auditor-General

PROPERTY MATTERS

- Property usage
- Capital works management
- Environmental matters and energy usage

COMMENTS BY THE OMBUDSMAN

There were no comments in 1997–98.

DECISIONS OF COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

There were no decisions in 1997–98.

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER INVESTIGATIONS

There were no investigations in 1997–98.

SECURITY OF ABS DATA HOLDINGS

PLANNING PROCESSES IN THE ABS

REDUCING PROVIDER LOAD

ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT

Appendix 16

The following table shows the total operating expenses for the ABS program with an estimated dissection by program component. The table also shows an estimate of the full cost of each statistical component.

The cost allocations have been compiled on the following basis:

- Direct and overhead costs comprise all expenses directly attributable to each component (such as salaries, overtime, travel, information technology, etc.) plus an estimated distribution of major corporate service costs (such as accommodation, telephones, etc.). To the extent practicable, overhead costs are allocated on the basis of estimated usage.
- Full cost for each statistical component comprises direct and overhead costs for the component plus an estimate of costs for services received from other components less an estimate of the cost of services provided to other components. To the extent practicable, service costs are allocated on the basis of estimated usage.

ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT, 1997-98
(\$'000)

<i>Components</i>	<i>Direct & overhead costs</i>	<i>Cost of services received</i>	<i>Cost of services provided</i>	<i>Statistical Components FULL COST</i>	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A+B-C)	%(a)
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS					
Dissemination	8 159	1 474	9 634	—	0.0
Marketing and Public Relations	4 432	1074	5 506	—	0.0
Client Services	9 325	3 800	7 721	5405	2.5
Library Services	1 943	435	2 379	—	0.0
National Accounts	5 157	5 035	1 732	8 460	3.9
International Accounts	5 499	3 853	—	9 352	4.3
International Trade	2 631	1 711	—	4 342	2.0
Financial Accounts	2 037	1 359	—	3 396	1.6
Public Sector Accounts	4 512	2 746	—	7 258	3.4
Prices	7 570	4 755	—	12 325	5.7
Business Statistics	3 631	4 768	—	8 399	3.9
Economy Wide Statistics	2 598	3 988	—	6 585	3.1
Small Business Statistics	890	827	—	1 717	0.8
Science and Technology	1 332	899	—	2 231	1.0
Agriculture	4 524	4 424	220	8 728	4.1
Mining	839	613	—	1 452	0.7
Manufacturing	5 093	4 361	1 301	8 154	3.8
Construction	5 345	2 832	—	8 176	3.8
Transport	3 070	2 316	-1	5 386	2.5
Service Industries	6 092	6 248	—	12 340	5.7
Tourism	1 533	1 130	—	2 663	1.2
Environment	863	810	—	1 674	0.8
Business Register	7 335	2 678	10 012	—	0.0
Economic Statistics Standards	1 252	377	1 629	—	0.0
Business Methods	3 275	2 489	5 764	—	0.0
SPEED	757	859	1616	—	0.0
Census	17 171	7 720	—	—	(a)
Demography	3 347	2 790	—	6 137	2.8
Labour Statistics	13 516	30 592	550	43 558	20.2
Social Statistics	10 279	15 390	—	25 669	11.9
National Centres for Crime, Sport and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics	4 195	3003	—	7 198	3.3
Geography	1 301	892	744	1 448	0.7
Population Statistics Standards	1 461	445	1 905	—	0.0
Statistical Coordination	381	249	—	630	0.3
Analytical Services and Time Series Analysis	1 970	1 016	951	2 035	0.9
Mathematical Statistics	5 434	3 241	7 660	1 014	0.5

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT, 1997-98
(\$'000) — continued

<i>Components</i>	<i>Direct & overhead costs</i>	<i>Cost of services received</i>	<i>Cost of services provided</i>	<i>Statistical Components FULL COST</i>	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A+B-C)	%(a)
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS — (continued)					
Population Surveys	27 914	5 880	31 373	2 421	1.1
Statistical Services and User Liaison	4 593	2 692	—	7 284	3.4
Information Technology Bureau(b)	410	2 724	3 134	—	0.0
Technology Application(b)	3 320	2 943	6 263	—	0.0
Data Management	2 174	31	2 205	—	0.0
Data Management Coordination and Support	732	221	953	—	0.0
Technology Research	564	75	640	—	0.0
Economic Statistics Group Support	4 468	462	4 930	—	0.0
Population Statistics Group Support	2 264	59	2 323	—	0.0
Methodology Division Business Office	630	10	641	—	0.0
Information Services Division Business Office	1 827	61	1 887	—	0.0
Technology Services Division Support	884	54	938	—	0.0
<i>Sub-program total</i>	208 529	146 410	114 610	240 329	—
<i>Sub-program excluding Census(a)</i>	191 358	138 690	114 610	215 438	100
CORPORATE SERVICES					
Executive	5 462	575	6 037	—	—
Human Resources	6 173	1 630	7 803	—	—
Organisation and People Development	5 923	1 134	7 057	—	—
Financial Resources	4 592	614	5 206	—	—
Office Services	5 528	1 366	6 894	—	—
Secretariat	725	179	904	—	—
International Relations Unit	531	74	605	—	—
Corporate Planning	399	67	466	—	—
Corporate Services Division Support	2 468	93	2 561	—	—
<i>Sub-program total</i>	31 801	5 732	37 533	—	—
PROGRAM TOTAL	240 329	152 142	152 142	240 329	—

(a) The cost of the Population Census component varies so widely over the 5 yearly Census cycle that it distorts the percentages applying to other statistical components. Accordingly, the full cost of the Population Census has been excluded in the calculation of the share of costs attributable to other components. (b) The costs of this component were 'recovered' from other components through an internal cost recovery process. The amount shown against this component represents the residual costs allocated to the component which were not subject to cost recovery.

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